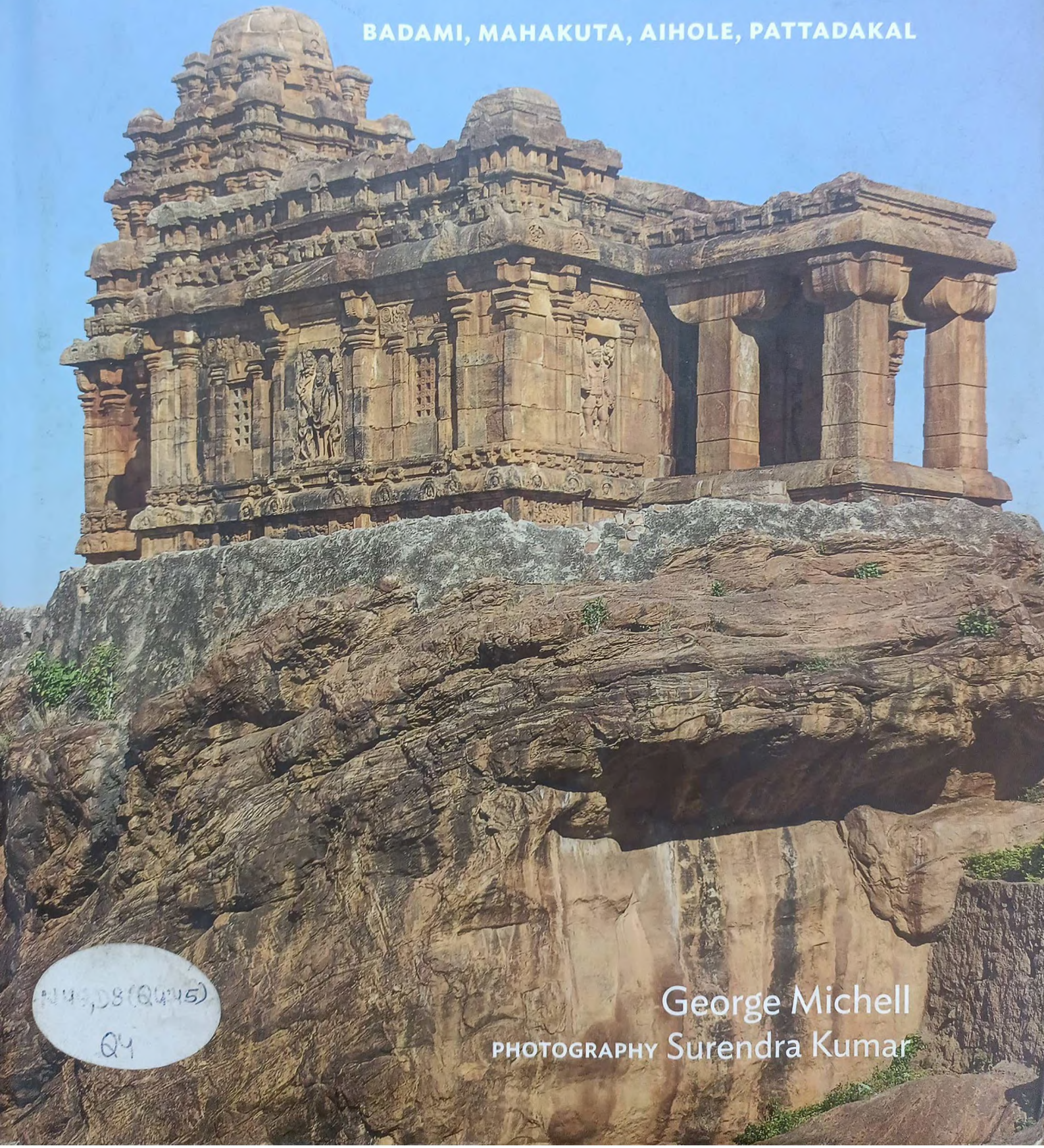
Temple Architecture and Art of the Early Chalukyas

BADAMI, MAHAKUTA, AIHOLE, PATTADAKAL



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George Michell
PHOTOGRAPHY Surendra Kumar

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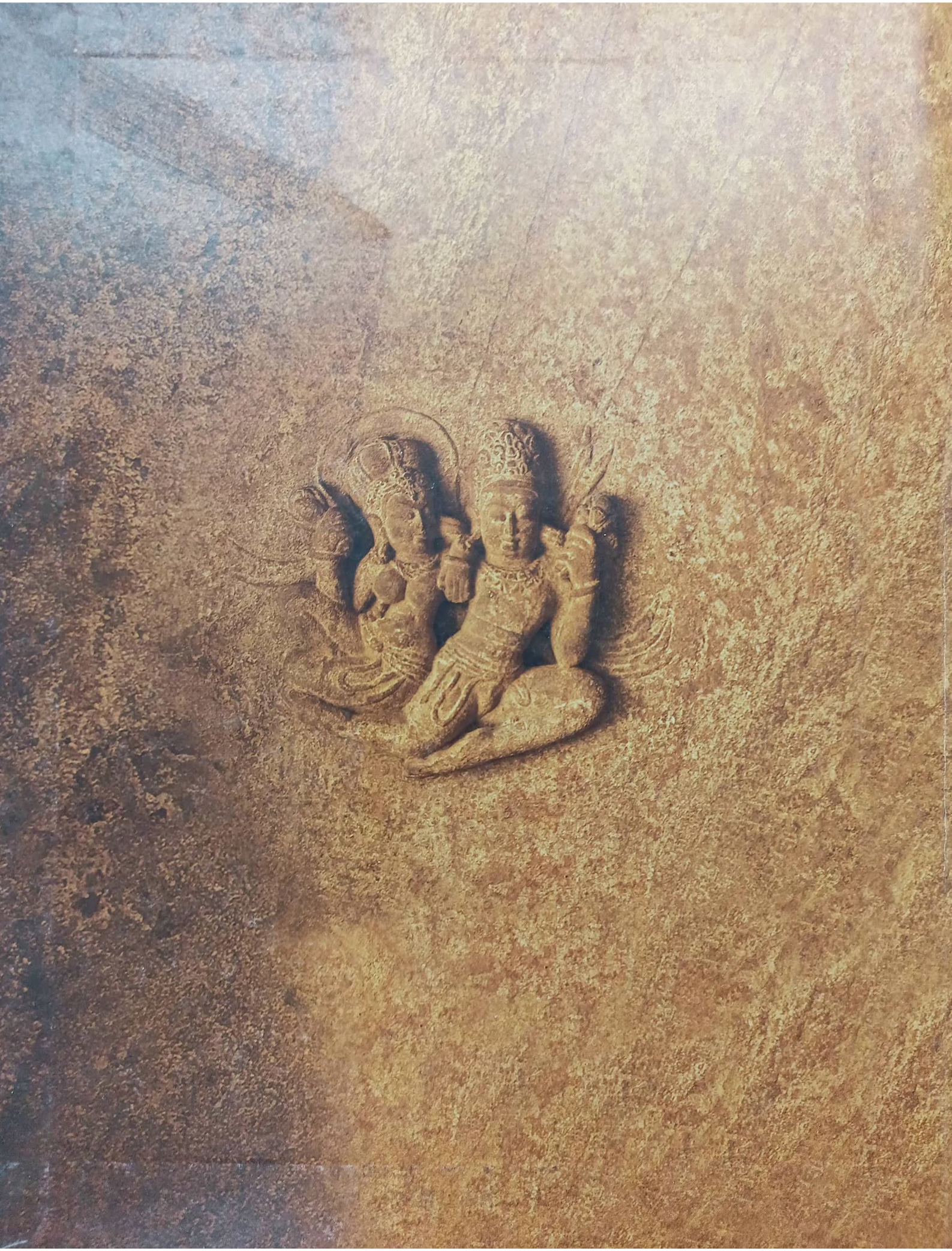

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PREFACE

The author's fascination with the architecture and art of the Early Chalukyas dates back to the mid-1960s, when he first visited India as an architecture student. After furthering his studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, he selected the temples of Badami, Mahakuta, Aihole and Pattadakal as the topic for his PhD. With the help of a travel scholarship and the talents of fellow architects Garry Martin and Jiri Skopek, the author undertook field trips to the Badami region in 1970-71 and again in 1972-73 to make accurate measured surveys of the monuments. These architectural plans, elevations and sections were incorporated into the dissertation that he submitted in 1974, published the following year as *An Architectural Description and Analysis of the Early Western Calukyan Temples*, but now long out of print. In the years since, however, the temples of Badami, Mahakuta, Aihole and Pattadakal in present-day Karnataka have become increasingly well known to travellers, both Indian and foreign, partly due to the inscription in 1987 of the Pattadakal monuments on UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage List. Even so, the Early Chalukya temples of the Badami region are still less than adequately appreciated, and up to now have lacked an adequately illustrated publication. Hence the present volume reproduces most of the measured drawings from the author's dissertation, together with splendid, newly commissioned photographs by Surendra Kumar. During his recent visits to the Badami region to prepare the text for this volume the author has benefited from specialist advice of Dr Sheelakant Pattar and the expert assistance of Chandru Katageri.

PAGE 4
Chatur-mukha linga in the pavilion in the tank at Mahakuta.

It is perhaps worth noting at the outset that in spite of their obvious appeal the Early Chalukya temples continue to pose formidable difficulties for researchers, the author being no exception. The overall scarcity of historical data means that the patrons and dates of most monuments belonging to the period spanning from the end of the 6th to the middle of the 8th centuries remain obscure. This means that the chronology of the temples presented here can only be regarded as tentative. Then there are the diverse styles of the monuments themselves, which in the Badami region present a unique juxtaposition of distinctive Southern and Northern Indian traditions, here referred to as Dravida and Nagara. These even come to intermingle within the same monument, while at the same time blending with local constructional idioms. The resulting stylistic proliferation hinders any straightforward architectural classification. A further confusion is caused by the names by which the Early Chalukya temples are known today, which do not reveal their original cult dedications. The author would also like to point out that his coverage of Early Chalukya temples is here restricted to the Badami region, and does not include the temples sponsored by these rulers at other sites, such as Alampur in present-day Andhra Pradesh. In spite of these research problems and limitations, the author sincerely hopes that the drawings and photographs presented in this volume will convince readers that the Early Chalukya temples are of outstanding architectural and artistic interest.

George Michell
Goa, January 2014

LEFT
Row of *gana* dancers; basement frieze of Cave 2 above Badami.

FOLLOWING PAGES
Ruined Nandi *mandapa* of the Mallikarjuna temple, Pattadakal.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From the second half of the 6th century to the middle of the 8th century the Deccan region of peninsular India came under the sway of a line of rulers based for most of this period in the Badami region. This dynasty is today generally referred to as the Early Chalukyas, in order to distinguish it from another line, which also bore the name of Chalukya, but with which it had no family connection. (Active during the 11th-12th centuries, the Late Chalukyas governed from Kalyan, some 250 kilometres north of Badami.)

With their capital at Badami, known at the time as Vatapi, the Early Chalukyas achieved political unification of much of the Deccan for almost 200 years, even though during this period portions of their territories were temporarily lost to the Pallavas from the Tamil country in Southern India. Just after 750 the Early Chalukyas succumbed to the Rashtrakuta invasion from Maharashtra in the northern Deccan, and altogether disappear from history. Contemporary inscriptions, together with those from Late Chalukya times, constitute the principal source of information about the Early Chalukya kings and their achievements. These records are engraved onto the walls and columns of rock-cut shrines and structural stone temples, as well as on free-standing stone columns and copper-plates, and even on natural cliff faces and boulders. They are written in Sanskrit and medieval Kannada languages, mostly in Southern Indian script, with dates given in the Shaka era (here converted throughout into the Common Era). The task of copying and studying these lithic and metal documents has now been accomplished, with the result that the outline of Early Chalukya history is fairly well established.

Before embarking upon a summary history of the Early Chalukyas it is worth noting the setting where these rulers were based for most of their careers. While their domains extended across the greater part of the Deccan, the heartland of their kingdom may be identified with the Malprabha river valley in what is now Bagalkot District of Karnataka. The Early Chalukya temples described in this volume are located in and around the towns of Badami and Aihole, the village of Pattadakal and the sacred *tirtha* of Mahakuta, all situated on or near to the Malprabha, which here flows in a north-easterly direction across the Deccan plain towards the Krishna river. Hills enclose much of this area to create a valley about 30 kilometres long and up to 5 kilometres wide. The valley is partly blocked at either end by rugged outcrops of sandstone bluffs, below which are located Badami and Aihole, as if to guard the approaches from the south-west and north-east respectively. In addition to its defensive advantages, the Malprabha valley also offered opportunities for the cultivation of rice and other crops, on which the Early Chalukyas depended, an agricultural activity that continues to this day. The concentration of so many Early Chalukya monuments in this comparatively confined area indicates a marked concentration of political power, economic resources and artistic patronage. Though the Early Chalukya kings worshipped different Hindu deities, and possibly even Jain *Tirthankaras*, they employed the boar associated with Vishnu's Varaha incarnation for their dynastic emblem,

FACING PAGE
View of Badami, capital of the Early Chalukyas.

BELOW
Dynastic emblem of the Early Chalukyas; column detail from the Lad Khan temple in Aihole.

POLAKESHI I AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARLY CHALUKYA KINGDOM

According to the legends contained in their inscriptions the Early Chalukyas hailed from Ayodhya. But whether the family actually migrated from Northern India to the Deccan during the 5th or early 6th century, or merely claimed a link with this mythical royal city is not known; most likely, the family had its origins in Gujarat or Maharashtra. Though the names of earlier ancestral figures are given in these records, it is only with Polakeshi I (r. ca 540–66) that the true history of the Early Chalukyas begins. A Sanskrit inscription dated 543, engraved in duplicate onto a rock face above Badami, records that the hill above had been fortified by Vallabheshvara, The Beloved Lord, one of Polakeshi's many epithets. It is possible that Badami may have been the previous residence of the Kadambas and/or the Gangas, but no remains of these earlier rulers have yet been discovered. The Kadambas and Gangas were adherents of both Buddhism and Jainism, as well as a range of brahminical Hindu cults. All these religions were practiced under the Early Chalukya patronage, though at some date there seems to have been a wilful suppression of Buddhism.

Polakeshi marked his coronation by performing the prestigious *ashvamedha* and fire sacrifices of Vedic origin, and endowing his Brahmin priests with the income of numerous villages, and purifying his body with water brought from the Ganga river in Northern India. Intended to infuse the newly established Chalukya dynasty and its capital with political and religious authority, such acts were accompanied by the construction of the hill fortress above the city, and the dam wall that created the great tank up to which the houses of the new capital were laid out.

While Polakeshi's success as a military adventurer and warrior was responsible for first establishing the presence of the Chalukyas in the Deccan, the king is also credited with intellectual accomplishments, being well acquainted with the legal treatise of Manu.

KIRTTIVARMA I AND MANGALESHA

Polakeshi I's elder son Kirttivarma I (r. 566–92) continued the expansionist policy of his father by subjugating the Kadambas to the west of Badami as well as the Mauryas and Alupas on the Arabian Sea coastal strip. It is likely that in these campaigns Kirttivarma was assisted by his younger half-brother Mangalesha. Under Kirttivarma's orders, Mangalesha had a cave-temple to Vishnu excavated into the cliffs above Badami. The inscription of 578 found in this rock-cut monument lists Kirttivarma's munificent grants to Brahmins, and details the king's triumphal military campaigns involving numerous chariots, elephants, horses and infantry. In a contemporary copper-plate record Kirttivarma is eulogised as an expert in Vedic science and political ethics, and as a ruler who kept his subjects firmly within the dharma of the four-fold caste system.

Mangalesha (r. 592–610) succeeded as king on Kirttivarma's death, the sons of the deceased king being too young to rule. Mangalesha developed an aggressive military policy that consolidated his half-brother's conquests, and then invaded the territories of the Kalachuris to the north, after which he erected a victory pillar, referred to as a *jayastambha*, at Mahakuta. This is inscribed with an edict that describes the king's accomplishments and campaigns, as well as his intention of setting up another such pillar on the bank of the Ganga, here referred to as the Bhagirathi. While the pillar specifies grants to Makuteshvaranatha, the temple to this deity that now stands at Mahakuta is most likely a replacement of an earlier shrine. However, the cave-temple in Aihole known as Ravanaphadi may be associated with Mangalesha. Letters engraved on the rock beneath the sculpted tableau of Nataraja inside this excavation mention Ranavikranta, Mangalesha's second name. The *saptamatrikas* that flank the

Nataraja icon relate to those dynastic panegyrics that claim that the Early Chalukyas 'were protected by the seven divine mothers'. Quite possible Ravanaphadi is a corruption of Ravalaphadi, the word 'ravala' being related to 'ravakula' or 'royal family'. Such readings suggest the Nataraja icon may have represented a deified form of the king himself.

By 610, the eldest son of Kirttivarma had come of age. The determination of Mangalesha to secure the Early Chalukya throne for his own son led to a civil war, in the course of which Mangalesha lost his life, most probably killed by the youthful prince, who then assumed the title of Polakeshi (II). The details of the struggle for power are lost, but the consequences must have been traumatic for in the words of a contemporary inscription: 'the world was encompassed by darkness'.

POLAKESHI II AND THE PALLAVA OCCUPATION

The expansion of the Chalukya domains continued under Polakeshi II (r. 610–42), the most famous of the Early Chalukya rulers prior to the middle of the 7th century. After attaining the throne at the youthful age of about twenty, he was immediately taken up with the task of repairing the damage caused by the civil war of the closing years of Mangalesha's reign. Polakeshi restored the fortunes of the kingdom and embarked upon a series of aggressive campaigns. These were at first directed against subordinate feudatories in the north-western part of the Deccan, a policy that led to conflict with Harshavardhana of Kanauj, the greatest ruler of Northern India at the time. After defeating Harshavardhana before 613 at some unspecified battle site, Polakeshi returned to Badami equipped with the title of Parameshvara, or Highest Lord, to celebrate the five great royal fire sacrifices. He then appointed his brother Vishnuvardhana as his heir apparent, involving him in the administration of several of the furthest provinces of the kingdom, including the north-western zone of the Deccan, bordering on Gujarat.

Polakeshi's resounding victories and benign administration came to be known beyond India. In 626 he sent an envoy bearing letters and gifts to the court of Khusrau, the Sasanian ruler of Iran, a mission that was apparently reciprocated. By about 630 Polakeshi, with the assistance of Vishnuvardhana, had extended Early Chalukya control into the Andhra country in the eastern Deccan. These provinces were placed under the direct command of Vishnuvardhana, who was given the right to bequeath these newly won domains to his progeny. Thus was initiated an independent, Andhra branch of the family, sometimes referred to as the Eastern Chalukyas, which lasted for almost 500 years.

Much of the information about the events of Polakeshi's reign derive from the inscribed record dated 634 on the Jain temple prominently situated on Meguti hill above Aihole. Though now ruined, this monument was evidently of architectural and religious significance. The Jain connection is explained by the religious affiliation of Ravikirti, the temple's sponsor and author of the inscription. Two or three years before the Meguti inscription, Polakeshi mounted a successful campaign to besiege Kanchipuram, the Pallava capital. Around 640 the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang (Hsuan Tsang) travelled through the Early Chalukya domains. He describes a fertile country inhabited by devoted but proud people, ruled over by a king commanding a fearless army supplied with countless elephants.

Soon after Xuanzang's visit, Polakeshi embarked upon a second expedition to the Tamil country. But this aroused the animosity of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I, who led a retaliatory invasion. That the Pallavas were successful in occupying Badami is confirmed by the rock inscription of Narasimhavarman of 642, after which nothing more is heard of Polakeshi, who is presumed to have been killed in the attempt to repulse the intruders.

VIKRAMADITYA I AND VINAYADITYA

How long Badami remained in Pallava hands is not known, nor whether any of the now dilapidated temples in and around Badami were at the time subjected to desecration. The scanty documents surviving from these years suggest that the royal family fled to Andhra, where there were succession disputes among rival claimants to the Early Chalukya throne. Meanwhile revolts of feudatories occurred in different parts of the kingdom. Not until one of Polakeshi's sons, Vikramaditya I (r. 654–71), rose to power some thirteen years after the Pallava invasion was the unity and strength of the Early Chalukya realm restored. Vikramaditya's expulsion of the Pallavas from Badami probably formed part of the struggles that preceded his succession to the throne, and which may have continued for some years afterwards. At the same time there were rebellions by hostile chiefs within the kingdom.

Vikramaditya was an outstanding ruler, who even surpassed the accomplishments of his father. He soon set about avenging the Pallava invasion, and by 674 was claiming victories over three successive Pallava rulers. During these campaigns he was assisted by his son Vinayaditya, who commanded the Early Chalukya forces that penetrated as far as the Pandya kingdom in the extreme south of the Tamil country. These far-flung expeditions took Vikramaditya I away from the Badami region for prolonged periods, during which his grandson Vijayaditya was involved in the affairs of state. Like his predecessors, Vikramaditya generally invoked the Varaha incarnation of Vishnu in his edicts and charters. Yet he seemed to have been a personal devotee of Shiva for in 659 he underwent an initiation ceremony supervised by a renowned Shaiva guru whom he then generously rewarded.

On succeeding to the Early Chalukya throne, Vinayaditya (r. 671–96) presided over a peaceful and prosperous kingdom, making repeated tours of his extensive domains, occasionally accompanied by his elder son Vijayaditya. The Svarga Brahma temple at Alampur, near the confluence of the Tungabhadra and Krishna rivers some 250 kilometres east of Badami, was erected by his younger son Lokaditya, in honour of his mother. Possibly she was Vinayavati, one of Vinayaditya's queens, who survived her husband for several years, and in 699 donated images of three deities in the newly built Jambulinga temple in Badami.

VIJAYADITYA

Having distinguished himself in the campaigns of his grandfather and father, Vijayaditya (r. 696–733) ascended the throne as an experienced commander and skilled political strategist. His reign turned out to be the lengthiest and most affluent in the whole history of the Early Chalukyas. Details of his birth, childhood and princely career in the first years of his rule are given in an inscription at Alampur. By 704 Vijayaditya was camped at Ellora in Maharashtra, where he may have commissioned a number of the cave-temples there. He subsequently visited Pattadakal on a number of occasions, commissioning the construction of a great Shaiva monument there that was named after him as Vijayeshvara, but which remained unfinished at the time of his death. In 713 he was based for a time at Alampur, during which period he may have supervised several of the temples that stand at that site. Vijayaditya's inscriptions here and at other locations list his gifts of villages to temples for their repair and maintenance, his ordering of tanks for irrigation purposes, and his generous grants to town and village councils. Such philanthropic munificence could only have been possible in the absence of protracted warring campaigns. Yet nowhere in the records of this king is there any mention of constructional activities, though it is likely that a number of temples in the Badami region were founded during the years spanned by his long reign.

Like his predecessors, Vijayaditya associated his son, the future Vikramaditya II, with him in the rule of the kingdom. Only towards the end of his reign was the long-standing enmity

with the Pallavas revived. An inscription of 731 records the return of his son to Badami after a successful expedition to Kanchipuram. It is perhaps worth noting that it was during Vijayaditya's period that Mangalarasa, a scion of the Early Chalukya family, established himself in Gujarat, founding there an independent dynasty that bore the Chalukya name.

VIKRAMADITYA II

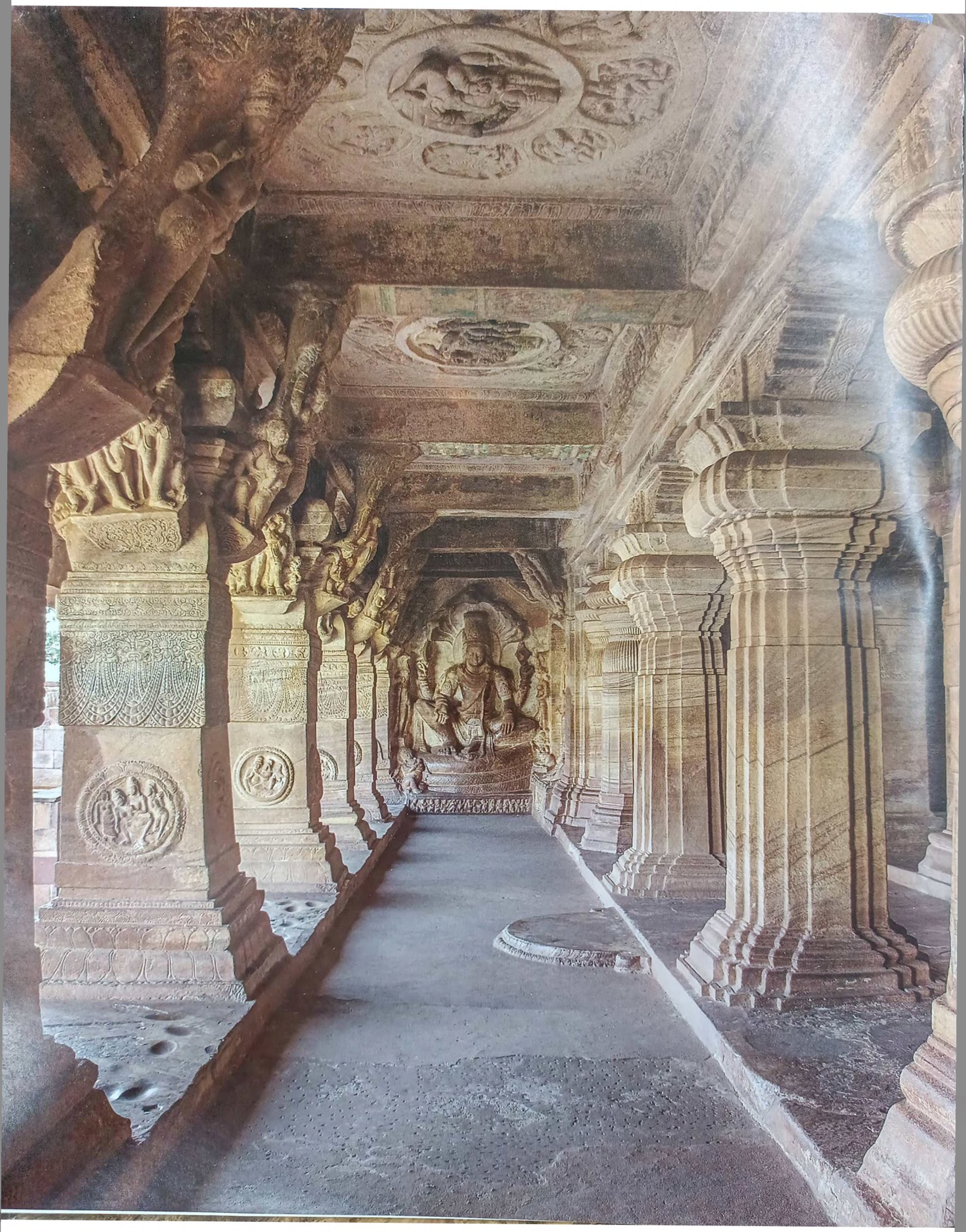
Succeeding his father, with whom he had shared the rule of the kingdom for some years, Vikramaditya II (r. 733–44) attained the throne at a comparatively young age. In an inscription of 735 he is described somewhat fancifully as 'one who grew younger every day'! Two military expeditions against the Pallavas were led by Vikramaditya in about 735 and 744, in addition to the earlier campaign when he was a prince, noticed above. Thus is explained the inscription at Pattadakal, which alludes to him as the 'three-fold vanquisher of Kanchipuram'. Having left an engraved record of his victory on the Kailasanatha temple at the Pallava capital, Vikramaditya returned to Badami laden with heaps of precious stones, gold jewellery, royal standards and war-elephants. Such booty helps explain the substantial investment in temple architecture and art in the Badami region. This reached a climax when Vikramaditya's queens, the two sisters Lokamahadevi and Trailokyamahadevi, erected the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna complexes at Pattadakal, originally named after their royal patrons. It is tempting to conclude that these monuments, the largest, most artistically ambitious of the entire Early Chalukya era, were intended to honour the king's military triumphs over the Pallavas. Among other constructional projects undertaken during Vikramaditya's reign was the Durga temple in Aihole. According to an inscription on the adjacent gateway this was financed by Komarasimha, a non-royal patron, and originally dedicated to the sun-divinity Aditya.

The death of Vikramaditya appears to have been commemorated close to a sacred waterfall near the village of Bhadranayakana Jalihal, some 10 kilometres west of Pattadakal. One of the small, simple shrines that stand here has an inscription mentioning the 'funerary-casket' of Vikramaditya. This probably referred to a vessel containing the cremated remains of the king that was buried at a spot over which the shrine was erected. Rudimentary structures in the vicinity may also have functioned in a similar manner.

KIRTTIVARMA II AND THE RASHTRAKUTA CONQUEST

The grandiose temple projects that marked Vikramaditya's reign no doubt continued under that of Kirttivarma II (r. 744–57), last of the Early Chalukya line. The complexes founded by Vikramaditya's queens at Pattadakal, noticed above, were probably still under construction during his period, together with the nearby Papanatha temple. Information about the achievements of Vijayaditya and Vikramaditya and their building activities is provided in the lengthy edict engraved onto a free-standing pillar set up by Kirttivarma in 754 at Pattadakal.

It was this ruler's misfortune to be threatened and then finally defeated by the Rashtrakutas, a line of powerful rulers established in Maharashtra. The Rashtrakuta king who actually overthrew Kirttivarma was Dantidurga. An inscription of Dantidurga of 754 speaks of the destruction of Early Chalukya power as an accomplished fact, in spite of the fact that Kirttivarma's pillar edict at Pattadakal is dated in the same year. After forging an alliance with Nandivarman II, the contemporary Pallava ruler, Dantidurga declared himself supreme sovereign of the Deccan. Yet Kirttivarma must have survived for several years after the loss of the capital to the Rashtrakutas, for in 757 a grant was made by him from his 'victorious camp' next to the Bhima river. This is the last attested record of the Early Chalukyas.



ARCHITECTURE

The religious monuments of the Early Chalukyas are of outstanding interest for their transition from cutting into rock to free-standing construction, as well as for their range of distinctive architectural styles. Hardly anywhere else in India is it possible to find cave-temples and structural temples of the same period beside each other at the same site, as in Badami and Aihole; nor at other sites can temples be seen next to each other built in contrasting Dravida and Nagara styles, as at Mahakuta and Pattadakal. Furthermore, there is an intermingling of Dravida and Nagara idioms to produce schemes in which attributes deriving from different traditions are combined. Such technical and stylistic variety is supplemented by local architectural practices, which come to be blended with the more widespread Dravida and Nagara idioms.

The best explanation for this remarkable meeting and fusion of different building techniques and architectural styles is the geographical location of the Early Chalukya domains within the heartland of the Deccan. This region was particularly receptive to influences from both Southern and Northern India, no doubt as a result of the guilds of architects, masons and craftsmen from different regions who found employment under the Early Chalukyas. Though historical information about the origins, movements and engagements of such professional masters and workmen are lacking, the results of their endeavours are apparent in the Badami region. An exception to this dearth of data is the inscription on the eastern gateway to the Virupaksha complex at Pattadakal mentioning the names of the supervising architects. These figures must have been accorded considerable prestige for they are accorded the somewhat grandiose titles of Tribhuvan and Sarvasiddhi Achari, Masters of the Three Worlds and of the Abode of Good qualities, respectively.

CAVE-TEMPLES

Most likely excavated during the second half of the 6th century, the cave-temples in Badami and Aihole signal the highpoint of rock-cut architecture in this part of the Deccan. The layouts of these monolithic monuments reveal a dependence on earlier Buddhist and Shaiva excavated traditions elsewhere in the Deccan, as represented by the rock-cut shrines at Ajanta, Elephanta and Ellora in Maharashtra dating back to the late 5th and early 6th centuries. The plan of Cave 3 in Badami, for instance, has a verandah-like outer colonnade, an inner *mandapa* with columns disposed on four sides of a square, open space, and a small sanctuary cut into the rear wall. Such an arrangement recalls the *viharas* at Ajanta. The sandstone monolithic columnar forms to be found in this Badami cave-temple, especially the fluted shafts and 'compressed-cushion' capitals, are obviously derived from the basalt Maharashtra monuments just mentioned. In all likelihood, guilds who had worked at Ajanta, Elephanta and Ellora migrated to the Badami region once the Early Chalukyas had established themselves as active patrons. That these

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Columned aisle in Cave 3 above Badami, the largest cave-temple of the Early Chalukyas.

workmen are unlikely to have been of local origin is suggested by the total absence of rock-cut monuments in the Badami region prior to the Early Chalukyas. The other three Badami cave-temples repeat many of the features just noticed, but have interiors divided into regularly spaced aisles by rows of columns. Such layouts are not familiar in the Maharashtra rock-cut monuments, and may be considered an architectural innovation that occurred in Badami.

Though the two cave-temples in Aihole are here considered contemporary with those in Badami, they present variant schemes. Each of these is entered through a triple-bayed opening created by a pair of slender monolithic columns. Similar triple-bayed openings are disposed on three sides of an interior square space, giving access to subsidiary side chambers, and a principal sanctuary excavated into the rear walls, on axis with the entrance. Such triple-bayed openings are also familiar from Deccan rock-cut traditions, though mostly confined to the outer verandahs of *chaitya* halls and *viharas*, as at Ajanta and Aurangabad.

It is worth noting that though the Early Chalukya free-standing temples that succeed these excavated monuments do not repeat the layouts of the rock-cut monuments just described, many monolithic details are imitated in constructed form. These include the various column, capital and bracket types, the raised floor bands and ceiling beams, and the recessed bands around doorways. The same is true of the sculpted figures and decorative relief designs found on wall panels, angled brackets and ceiling panels.

STRUCTURAL TEMPLES

The earliest free-standing Early Chalukya temples are assigned to the first half of the 7th century. From this time on all the religious monuments sponsored by these rulers are constructed from blocks hewn directly out of the deep red sandstone rocks around Badami or the more yellowish sandstone found near Pattadakal and Aihole. That the stone used was of local origin is confirmed by the recent discovery of a quarry, some 5 kilometres north of Pattadakal. Here can still be seen partly chiselled, regularly shaped blocks, and even traces of contemporary iron tools. Once transported to the building site, such blocks were finally shaped and then assembled without any mortar, though occasionally secured with iron clamps. Bricks were sometimes also used, as is evident from the scanty remains unearthed by archaeologists in Aihole and Pattadakal.

Early Chalukya temples generally comprise different combinations of square sanctuaries, sometimes surrounded by passageways on three or four sides, quadrangular halls or *mandapas*, and entrance porches, all of the components being aligned on a single axis, most usually running west-to-east. *Mandapas* have multi-bayed plans, with lines of columns defining internal aisles that run from the entrance doorways to those of the sanctuaries. Some temples or small pavilions are fully open and consist entirely of columns; others are partly open, with frontal or side porches, and are thus partly columnar in construction. Even when interiors are walled in, full or half-columns are sometimes placed against the walls to help support the beams and roof slabs. In almost all cases, the open portions of temples are overhung by curving eaves. These vary from simple curved courses, to those with deep undercutting filled with wood-like ribs and rafters. Columns are monolithic, with massive square shafts, usually divided by one or more raised bands with part-circles above, often filled with delicate relief decoration. Bracket forms include those with curved profiles, or with angled profiles, often provided with multiple rolls that suggest clusters of wooden dowels.

External walls are raised on basements with superimposed mouldings of different shapes, generally with a curved *upana* at the bottom and a curved *kapota* at the top, the latter with tiny horseshoe-shaped false windows called *kudus*, marking the level of the floor within. Basements often incorporate tiny blocks fashioned as *yalis* and *makaras*, in what seems to be

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The Upper Shivalaya above Badami; one of the first structural temples of the Early Chalukyas.

an imitation of protruding timber floor beams. Access steps at entryways are flanked by curved balustrades carved from separate blocks, sometimes with rolled ends. Outer walls are treated in accordance with the different Dravida and Nagara modes, to be described below. Walls are capped with eaves (*kapotas*) that repeat those of the basement below, complete with *kudus*. The eaves carry the ends of the internal roof slabs, sometimes embellished with animal friezes, as in the basements beneath. Sanctuary walls are continued upwards to create hollow towers fashioned from corbelled stone course, topped by different shaped roofs with pot-like finials. The *mandapas* of larger temples are provided with parapets of different designs that conceal the roof slabs behind. These slabs are horizontal and raised up over the central aisles of *mandapas*, but sloping over the aisles on two, three and sometimes even four sides. In larger *mandapas*, these sloping slabs are combined in two successive tiers over double side aisles.

THE DRAVIDA STYLE

Associated with the building traditions of Southern India, the Dravida style is the first and most persistent architectural idiom to be adopted by the Early Chalukyas. Since no earlier Dravida structural monuments survive at other sites in Southern India, it is tempting to conclude that this style was an invention of the Early Chalukya architects. From the Badami region it came to be exported to other parts of Southern India, including Maharashtra under the Rashtrakutas, and Tamil Nadu under the Pallavas, Pandyas and Cholas.

Elevations of Dravida temples are divided vertically into moulded basements, pilastered walls, and parapets. The parapets present lines of model roof forms, including square-to-dome *kutas* at the corners, barrel-vaulted *shalas* in the middle, and intermediate horseshoe-shaped *panjaras*. Walls are divided horizontally into projections and recesses, carried from the basement through to the parapet. Changes in wall plane are marked by pilasters contiguous with the stone blocks. Sculpture niches are usually positioned on the projections, with lesser niches and perforated stone windows in the intervening recesses. Central wall projections on axis with the centre of the sanctuary within are sometimes emphasised by double or even triple pairs of pilasters. The more important sculpture niches and sometime even the windows are framed by pairs of secondary pilasters that do not rise up the full height of the walls, but terminate in pediments set beneath the *kapota* cornice. Pediment designs over these niches and windows vary from pairs of *makaras* with scrolling tails placed upon pilaster brackets to rows of parapet-like elements in shallow relief. The same *makara* and parapet-like elements are also employed as pediments over doorways, both in the entrance porches and at the entrances to the sanctuaries within. Towers rising over temple sanctuaries repeat at a diminished scale, and with a lesser number of projections, many of the features of the walls beneath, including the pilastered projections, capping *kapotas* and parapets. This result is a characteristic, multi-storeyed pyramidal superstructure. Dravida styled towers are crowned with square *kutas* or octagon-to-dome roofs, and even in one instance a hemispherical roof.

Almost all of the attributes just listed are to be found in the earliest Dravida temples, even though these are only partially preserved in the somewhat rudimentary Jain temple on Meguti hill in Aihole dated 634, and the damaged Upper and Lower Shivalayas in Badami of about the same period. The earliest, most complete Dravida monument of the Early Chalukya series is the Malegitti Shivalaya in Badami, which preserves intact its parapet of roof forms and tower with octagon-to-dome roof. Its layout presents a simple sequence of entrance porch, triple-aisled *mandapa* and small sanctuary. After the interruption in building activity caused by the Pallava occupation in the middle of the 7th century, the Dravida style was once again taken up by Early Chalukya architects and subsequently much developed. Among the first results of this new stylistic evolution are the matching Mahakuteshvara and Mallikarjuna at Mahakuta.

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Inscribed column of Kirttivarma II at Pattadakal, with the Dravida styled Sangameshvara temple in the distance.

These temples are much larger than their predecessors, with *mandapas* expanded into triple aisles, and with separate Nandi pavilions set on axis with their entrance porches. Prominent wall niches are framed by double pairs of pilasters. The Jambulinga temple in Badami, dated 699, presents an entirely different scheme, with a trio of sanctuaries opening off an expanded *mandapa* with five lateral aisles.

The Dravida mode attains a dramatic climax in the first half of the 8th century, as evidenced by a trio of royal temples at Pattadakal, beginning with the Sangameshvara, and continuing with the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna. Here can be seen the transformation of the Dravida religious monument into a formally planned complex, with the principal temple incorporating an expanded *mandapa* with sixteen columns and a free-standing Nandi pavilion in front. The axially aligned temple and pavilion stand in the middle of a rectangular walled and paved compound lined with sub-shrines, with entrance structures at either end. This achievement reflects the influence of the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, erected in the first quarter of the 8th century by Rajasimha Pallava, which was personally visited by Vikramaditya II on his incursion into the Tamil country. The Kanchipuram complex is the first Dravida scheme to locate a temple and detached *mandapa* within a grandly scaled walled compound lined with sub-shrines, with a monumental entrance on the east.

The elevations of the three great Pattadakal temples represent a substantial advance on earlier Dravida schemes. Wall projections on the Sangameshvara employ single pairs of pilasters, while those on the Virupaksha feature double pairs, and the Mallikarjuna triple pairs. Perforated windows of increasingly ornate design and virtuoso execution are set into the intervening recesses. In each temple such wall schemes are interrupted by porches on three sides that give access to the *mandapas*. Towers over the sanctuaries employ increasing numbers of stepped storeys, but only those of the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna have frontal projection with enlarged *gavakshas*, or horseshoe-shaped arches, a feature derived from contemporary Nagara practice (described below). Their *mandapa* interiors are expanded into five aisles in both directions, a feature that is imitated in the somewhat smaller outer *mandapa* of the nearby Papanatha temple. The sanctuaries are surrounded by spacious corridors lit by windows, while small sub-shrines are set into the walls on either side of the sanctuary doorways.

That the Dravida style perfected at Pattadakal was capable of further evolution is apparent from the stupendous Kailasa monument at Ellora. This rock-cut facsimile of a structural building is attributed to Krishna I, the ruler who inherited the territories of the Early Chalukyas upon assuming the Rashtrakuta throne in 756. The Ellora monolith repeats the overall layout of the Virupaksha at Pattadakal, complete with a sixteen-columned *mandapa* entered through triple porches, a detached Nandi pavilion, and entrance gate. The sanctuary tower imitates the triple-storeyed Virupaksha superstructure, but is crowned with an octagon-to-dome rather than a *kuta*, as in the earlier temples in Badami and Mahakuta. The Dravida idiom continued to evolve in the Badami region during the 9th to 12th centuries under the patronage of both the Rashtrakutas and Late Chalukyas. But in the process it lost much of its original clarity and elegance.

THE NAGARA STYLE

It was from Andhra, where the Early Chalukyas sought refuge during the Pallava occupation of Badami, that the Nagara style was imported to the Badami region. How the Nagara style came to be familiar to builders in Andhra is not known, for this zone is considerably distant from Northern India where the Nagara style had first developed in the 5th-6th centuries.

Nagara temples have layouts with central projections on sanctuary and *mandapa* walls, devoid of pilasters, carried upwards from the basement mouldings into the towers that rise

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The Galaganatha temple at Pattadakal, with its well-preserved Nagara styled tower.

above. Sculpture niches on wall projections are created from pairs of pilasters that 'carry' pyramidal pediments formed from different combinations of diminutive full- and half-horseshoe-shaped motifs known as *gavakshas*. Nagara sanctuaries are invariably crowned with towers known as *shikharas*. These have characteristic, gently curving faces divided vertically into diminishing *kapota* tiers decorated with *gavakshas*, with ribbed gourd-like *amalakas* in relief positioned at the corners. Full *amalakas* and stone pots serve as finials at the summits. *Shikharas* usually have prominent frontal projections conceived as enlarged *gavakshas* that contain carved figures, especially of Shiva as Nataraja. *Gavaksha* motifs on Nagara towers designs evolve until they create overall mesh-like patterns, as seen in the Kashivishvanatha temple at Pattadakal, the most evolved Nagara styled monument of the Early Chalukya series. Other typical Nagara motifs are the vase-and-foliage motifs on the blocks at the bases and tops of columns, especially those defining entrance porches.

All these attributes are present in the temples at Alampur, one of which, the Svarga Brahma, may be assigned to the late 7th century according to an inscription of one of Vinayaditya's sons. Like the other monuments at Alampur, the Svarga Brahma comprises a sanctuary with passageway on three sides, preceded by a triple-aisled *mandapa*, all contained within a rectangle of walls. There is an entrance porch on the east, and 'blind' porches projecting outwards on three sides of the passageway. The Galaganatha at Pattadakal, though now missing most of its lower portions, conforms to this scheme, and for this reason may be considered an imitation of the Alampur monument, probably designed and built by an architect and team from Andhra. Other temples in the Badami region, such as those in Aihole, also employ Nagara styled rectangular walled layouts containing sanctuary with passageway, adjoining *mandapa* and entrance porch. The Nagara origin of these schemes is apparent even when the buildings lack a *shikhara* tower, as is the case with some examples in Aihole.

The Nagara temples at Pattadakal and Aihole just noticed may be compared with other more rudimentary, but not necessarily earlier, monuments. These consist of small sanctuaries with typical *shikhara* towers fronted by *gavakshas*, approached through small walled vestibules or open porches only, as at Pattadakal and Mahakuta. *Shikhara* towers in the Aihole Durga and Pattadakal Papanatha temples crown sanctuaries that form part of unique, non-Nagara type layouts. Unlike the Dravida style, the Nagara style does not outlast Early Chalukya patronage, and altogether disappears from the Badami region after the middle of the 8th century.

LOCAL IDIOMS

In addition to the Dravida and Nagara styles, both of which came to be widely dispersed throughout Southern and Northern India respectively, Early Chalukya temples also register the influence of other idioms. The first of these may for convenience be labelled as the Deccan idiom. Though this may have had its origins in Gujarat, in time it came to be adopted and fully developed in Karnataka and Andhra. Temples of this type are recognised by their pyramidal square superstructures composed entirely from superimposed, diminishing lines of *kapotas*, separated by pilastered recessed courses, occasionally provided with capping *amalaka* finials. (Some scholars have referred to such towered compositions as 'phamsana', but this term is not adopted here.) The principal Early Chalukya examples of the Deccan idiom are the Mallikarjuna and Galaganatha temples in Aihole, as well as several smaller shrines at Mahakuta.

The other idiom appears to be confined to the Badami region, and for this reason is here termed as the Malprabha idiom. Temples of this type are fully or partly open as porches, and are roofed with sloping stone slabs, with external joints protected by thin, log-like stone strips, in imitation of thatch and timber construction. The most evolved illustration of this idiom is the Lad Khan temple in Aihole. This unique structure has a square *mandapa* with a central bay with a raised horizontal roof, surrounded on four sides by double tiers of sloping stone

slabs with protective stone strips. The neighbouring Gaudargudi is entirely open on four sides, but containing a small, walled sanctuary within, roofed with sloping slabs on four sides. There is no tower, only a low parapet concealing the horizontal slabs over the sanctuary and bays immediately in front. The same sloping slabs are seen elsewhere in Aihole, notably in two temples of the Kunti group and the Hucchappayyamatha, each of which is partly open as a porch. Sloping roof slabs in the Durga temple are disposed in two tiers that run continuously round the building, including its semi-circular end. Even the great Dravida monuments at Pattadakal employ double tiers of sloping roof slabs, together with protective, log-like strips over the joints, though these features are concealed from view behind elaborate parapets.

Like the Dravida style, both the Deccan and Malprabha idioms just described survive into later times. Temples with pyramidal towers and with sharply angled roof slabs over porches and partly open *mandapas* continue to be erected in the Badami region under the Rashtrakutas and Late Chalukyas, spreading throughout much of the Deccan in the 12th-13th centuries during the Hoysala and Kakatiya periods.

STYLISTIC INTERMINGLING

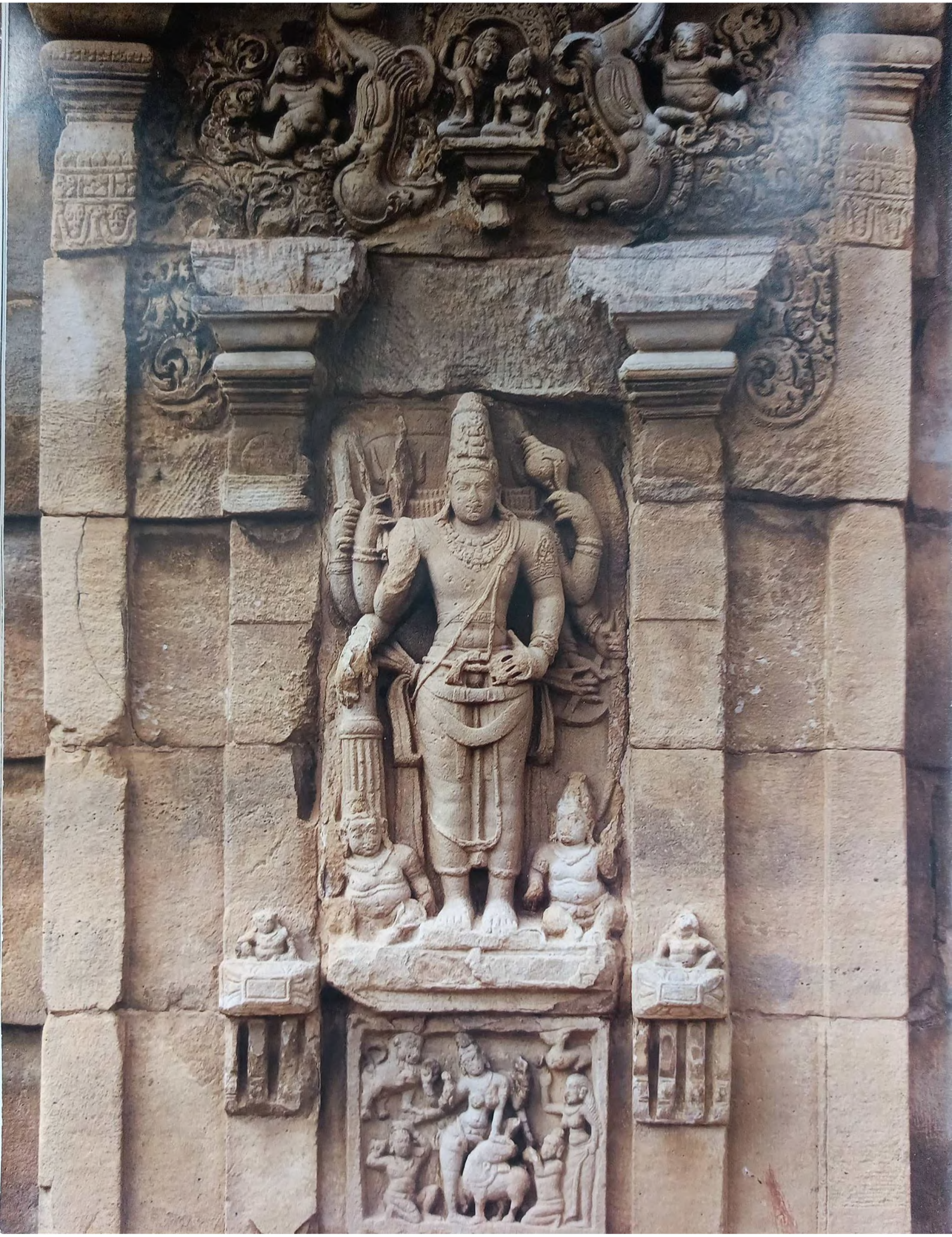
In addition to the juxtaposition of Dravida and Nagara temples built next to each other, as at Mahakuta and Pattadakal, there is in Early Chalukya architecture a unique intermingling of styles, in which attributes derived from different traditions are combined in the same monument. Such stylistic intermixing could only have occurred where different groups of workmen were encouraged to collaborate on the same project. While historical confirmation of such partnerships is lacking, there is in the Badami region the evidence of the temples themselves, especially from the late 7th century onwards.

The first of these stylistic amalgamations to be noticed is the intrusion of Nagara elements into Dravida architecture. Window pediments in the Dravida styled Mahakuteshvara temple at Mahakuta, for instance, incorporate Dravida *kutas* and *shalas*, as well as Nagara *gavakshas*. Even more prominent are the Nagara styled *gavakasha* projections on the frontal faces of the Dravida styled towers of the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples at Pattadakal. Exactly this type of Dravida tower with *gavaksha* projection is seen in the Kailasa monolith at Ellora, no doubt inspired by the Pattadakal Virupaksha.

Parallel to this phenomenon is the intrusion of Dravida elements into Nagara monuments. The Nagara styled Kashivishvanatha at Pattadakal has its *mandapa* doorway flanked by double pairs of pilasters headed by Dravida type *shalas*. These compositions contrast with the shallow, Nagara type wall niches elsewhere on the monument. The exterior of the Papanatha at Pattadakal is almost entirely Nagara in style, except for the parapet, which employs a line of fully articulated *shalas*, *kutas* and *panjaras*, in the typical Dravida manner. Similar *shalas* crown the interior sculpture niches inside the temple's outer *mandapa*.

A remarkable assemblage of Dravida and Nagara components is seen in the colonnaded verandah of the Aihole Durga. Sculpture niches and windows here display pediments with typical Dravida type *kutas*, *shalas* and *panjaras*, as well as with enlarged Nagara type full *gavakshas* and smaller part-*gavakshas*. The diversity of these compositions, no two of which are alike, presents a veritable 'showcase' of Early Chalukya architectural designs.

Turning now to the Malprabha idiom, with its characteristic part open, porch-like construction and sloping roof slabs: temples of this type in Aihole sometimes incorporate Nagara styled, *shikhara* towers, as in the Durga and the Hucchimalligudi and Hucchappayyagudi. The presence of such distinguishing sloping roofs in the larger Dravida styled temples at Pattadakal has already been noticed. Thus was the Malprabha idiom integrated with the mainstream Dravida and Nagara traditions promoted by the Early Chalukyas.



SCULPTURE

Early Chalukya temples are embellished with a profusion of sandstone carvings that present a broad array of Shaiva and Vaishnava cult divinities, in the company of consorts, family members, *vahanas* and attendants. These devotional images are complemented by the *dikpalas* and *matrikas*, as well as illustrations of popular episodes from the *Ramayana* epic and the Krishna and Kiratarjuniya stories. To this essentially Hindu imagery must be added the icons associated with Jainism and Buddhism, even though the latter survive only in a sadly defaced condition. In addition to gods, goddesses and saviours Early Chalukya art also presents *dvarapalas* armed with diverse weapons; human couples posed in affectionate embrace beneath fruit-bearing trees; maidens attired in gorgeous courtly costumes and hairstyles; and celestials flying through clouds. These divine and quasi-human figures are accompanied by accessory topics that play a crucial protective role within the sacred monument: notably, impish pot-bellied *ganas* with curly hair; fierce monster masks with staring eyes; aquatic *makaras* with cascading, foliate tails; and fantastic, leonine *yalis*. Throughout temple art, these figures and animals are accompanied by a seemingly inexhaustible repertory of foliate and vegetal ornament, rendered in naturalistic, elegant carved relief.

STYLISTIC FEATURES

Early Chalukya art is characterised by naturalistically rendered bodies with robustly modelled torsos and limbs. The impression of solidity is alleviated by the intricately worked costumes, jewels and headdresses, the swaying attitudes of courtly maidens and their admirers and attendants, and the vigorous postures of gods, such as Nataraja or Shiva vigorously slaying his various enemies, Vishnu as Varaha rescuing the goddess Bhudevi or emerging as the giant Trivikrama with one leg kicked high, and Durga as Mahishasuramardini savagely spearing the buffalo demon. All these features are present in the carvings in the Badami cave-temples, which may be considered the first products of the Early Chalukya artists. These monolithic sculptures are related to the rock-cut art of Ajanta, Elephanta and Ellora in Maharashtra, which registers the influence of Gupta styled, Northern Indian art traditions dating back to the 5th-6th centuries. That this Northern Indian manner is found in Early Chalukya structural temples is evident from the Shiva and Vishnu wall panels on the Badami Malegitti Shivalaya dating from the early 7th century. These compositions reveal the clearly delineated facial details and solid bodily modelling that are hallmarks of the Gupta manner. This Gupta inspired figural robustness persisted up to the end of the Early Chalukya era, so evident from the sculpted panels in the colonnaded verandah of the Aihole Durga temple. A more southern, Pallava inspired idiom is evident elsewhere, as in the Vishnu panel on the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal. These subtly modelled figures are among the greatest masterpieces of Early Chalukya art.

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Eight-armed Vishnu, with Shiva and Parvati between ornate *makaras* above, and Durga spearing the buffalo beneath; wall panel on the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal.

Southern Indian traditions also had an impact on Early Chalukya artists, as is indicated by the reliefs in the rock-cut Ravanaphadi at Aihole, here considered contemporary with the Badami cave-temples. The Aihole figures are more slender and sinuous than those at Badami; they wear distinctive fluted costumes and tall crowns in a style clearly related to Pallava rock-cut icons dating from the 6th-7th centuries. Possibly they are the work of sculptors from the Tamil zone who found employment under the Early Chalukyas. A direct link with Pallava art in later times is verified by a relief panel portraying Durga riding on the lion, advancing on Mahisha who is represented with a human body, recoiling in horror. Carved in relief onto a bracket within the *mandapa* of the 8th century Pattadakal Mallikarjuna temple, this vivid scene is in reality a copy of a much larger, earlier relief in one of the cave-temples at Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu. One explanation for this iconographic replication is that Vikramaditya II brought Pallava artists back to the Early Chalukya homeland after his campaigns to Kanchipuram, only a short distance from Mamallapuram. This would explain the Pallava manner of many figures on the Pattadakal temples, especially those showing Shiva in various guises. While in most temples the identity of the artists is unknown, several walls panels at Pattadakal have engraved labels recording their names. That the names of the same artists are found on both the Virupaksha and Papanatha temples suggests that work proceeded simultaneously on these two projects at Pattadakal.

While the Northern and Southern Indian sculptural modes are effectively synthesised to create a clearly discernible Early Chalukya manner, an overall stylistic evolution is discernible. Over a period of almost 200 years bodies becoming increasingly slender in proportion, more dynamic in the disposition of limbs and torsos, and also occasionally twisted into vigorous postures, sometimes turned at an angle to the plane of the wall into which the figures are set. These features are all apparent in the wall panels of the Virupaksha, especially those compositions depicting Shiva leaning against Nandi, or affectionately embracing Parvati. This more fluid bodily art is sometimes accompanied by a concern with drama, as emphasised by cut-out bodies with almost three-dimensional modelled torsos and limbs, and ecstatic or aggressive facial expressions with clearly delineated mouths and eyes. Nowhere is this better seen than in the imposing *dvarapalas* guarding doorways to the *mandapas* and sanctuaries in the larger Pattadakal temples, and the Mahishasuramardini icon installed in a sub-shrine of the Virupaksha. Such a plastic expressiveness is also present in the animal art of the Early Chalukyas, as in the friezes of realistic and sometimes violently posed lions and elephants, as well as in the *yalis* with savage horns that are carved in almost three dimensions so as to appear to leap away from their supporting beams and brackets.

WALL PANELS AND CULT ICONS

Apart from the monolithic cult icons sculpted onto the side walls of the Badami and Aihole cave-temples, wall panels on structural temples are either finished *in situ*, as on the Sangameshvara temple at Pattadakal (where many remain unfinished), or carved onto separate blocks which are then inserted into in niche recesses, as in the Aihole Durga temple and Pattadakal Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples. The empty niches and uncut wall surfaces on the Aihole Jain temple on Meguti hill demonstrate that both techniques were sometimes employed on the same monument.

The Badami cave-temples have grandly scaled, sculpted compositions that give dramatic emphasis to their frontal verandahs, nowhere better seen than in the imposing figures in Cave 3 depicting Vishnu's avatars, Narasimha and Trivikrama, and the god as Vaikuntha, seated on the coils of Shesha, shielded by the cosmic cobra's seven hoods. In contrast, the panels in Cave 1 portray the eighteen-armed Nataraja beside the entrance, as well as syncretic matching images of Harihara and Ardhanarishvara, facing each other from either

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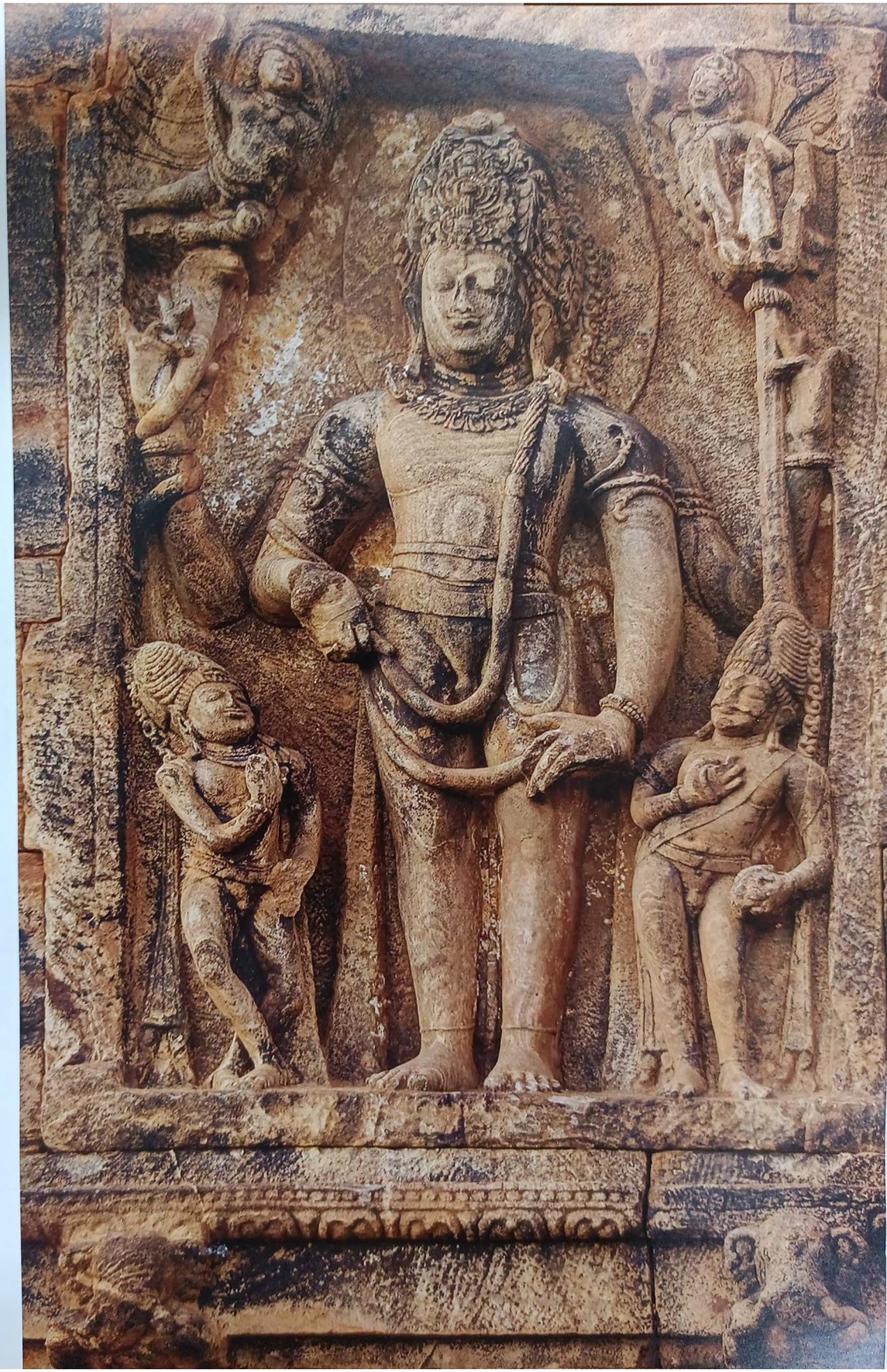
Standing Shiva; wall panel on the Malegitti Shivalaya outside Badami.



end of the frontal verandah. Comparable Shaiva themes are present in the Aihole Ravanaphadi, where an expanded tableau is devoted to Nataraja dancing in the company of Parvati, Ganesha and the *saptamatrikas*. The vestibule to the adjacent *linga* sanctuary is flanked by panels of Varaha, and Mahishasuramardini. Wall panels in other monuments aim at a balance of Vaishnava and Shaiva topics, as in the Badami Malegitti Shivalaya, which has a pair of Vishnu and Shiva icons on the north and south faces of the *mandapa*. Both deities are depicted with the rear two hands holding conch and disc (Vishnu) or snake and trident (Shiva), from which miniature *purusha* figures emerge, and the front left hands resting on the thigh, in what appears to be a formal royal gesture. Both figures wear gorgeous jewelled costumes and have elaborate hairdos.

Cult affiliations of Early Chalukya monuments are generally realised through a limited range of wall panels. The Upper Shivalaya in Badami, in spite of its present name, betrays its original Vaishnava dedication from the panels of Krishna holding up Mount Govardhana, and the same god subduing the serpent demon Kaliya, and a depiction of Narasimha disembowelling his victim. Similarly, the Shaiva affiliation of the Mahakuteshvara and Mallikarjuna temples at Mahakuta is apparent from the multiple icons of Shiva on the outer walls, many of them showing the god in virtually the same guise. The same is true of the wall panels on the smaller, adjacent Sangameshvara temple, which portray Shiva as Lakulisha, Ardhanarishvara and Harihara. An identical trio of Shaiva divinities is found on the Kadasiddheshvara temple at Pattadakal.

Wall panels on the larger Pattadakal monuments encompass a broad range of Shaiva themes, though even here one or two images of Vishnu are incorporated. On the Sangameshvara, for instance, Shiva appears thrusting his trident into the demon Andhaka, dancing in the skin of the elephant demon, and accompanied by the skeletal ascetic Bhringi. The Virupaksha temple is unsurpassed for the number and range of its wall panels. The balance of Shaiva and Vaishnava themes is particularly noticeable on the east facade of its *mandapa*, where matching panels portray Shiva appearing out of the flaming *linga*, and Vishnu as Trivikrama with one leg kicked up high. Among the multiple appearances of Shiva elsewhere on this monument are several versions of Nataraja, as well as Shiva with Parvati and with Nandi, Lakulisha, Ardhanarishvara, Bhikshatana, Bhairava and Harihara. Panels on the side walls of the porch projections show Shiva with Parvati on Mount Kailasa, and in the company of sages. Among the Vaishnava panels on the Virupaksha is a stately, eight-armed image of Vishnu holding an assortment of weapons, and a representation of Varaha, both on the north face of the monument. Here, too, appears a *Ramayana* sequence, though this is relegated to the south-west corner of the *mandapa* walls. These panels show Rama pursuing the golden deer, Sita's abduction, and Jatayu's attempt to intercept Ravana. The only monument in Aihole illustrating a similarly broad range of icons is the Durga temple. Niches in its colonnaded verandah accommodate magnificent panels of Shiva with Nandi, Narasimha, Vishnu riding on Garuda, Varaha, Mahishasuramardini, and Harihara. Somewhat curiously, there is no portrayal of Surya, the divinity to whom the temple was originally consecrated, though admittedly there are several empty niches.

Wall panels on the Pattadakal Papanatha temple are of exceptional interest for their narrative series. Those on the south and east walls present the most extensive depiction of the *Ramayana* in Early Chalukya art. The story begins with the fire sacrifice conducted by Dasharatha, and ends with the monkeys building the bridge to Lanka, and the battle between Rama and Ravana. A lesser number of panels on the north wall of the same monument are devoted to the Kiratarjuniya story. They show Shiva as a forest hunter, and fighting with Arjuna over the slain boar. Significantly, the climactic scenes from both the *Ramayana* and Kiratarjuniya occur in comparable locations, at the two eastern corners of the outer *mandapa*.

Virtually no original cult icons are preserved in Early Chalukya temples, other than the *linga*s fashioned out of polished green granite. These generally present superimposed octagonal and cylindrical shafts, elevated on massive square pedestals. A variant *linga* type, possibly dating back to the 6th century, is that with four delicately delineated faces of the god, still under veneration in the small pavilion standing in the middle of the tank at Mahakuta.

One of the rare surviving Hindu icons intended for worship within an Early Chalukya sanctuary is the Mahishasuramardini in the Virupaksha temple, already referred to. One of the artistic masterpieces of the period, this almost three-dimensional composition portrays both goddess and demon with dramatically twisted torsos, their heads turned away from each other, so as to avoid visual contact. In contrast, the few Early Chalukya Jain monuments all preserve their original cult icons. Majestic figures of Mahavira are shown seated on elaborate thrones with prominent bolsters and ornate side projections, headed by parasols and flanked by *chamara*-bearing attendants. Such icons are carved onto the rear walls of sanctuaries in the Jain cave-temples at Badami and Aihole, and as a separate sculpted slab installed in the sanctuary of the temple on Meguti hill above Aihole. Additional Jain icons in the two Jain cave-temples just noticed portray Parshvanatha, identified by a multi-hooded cobra that rises over the saviour's head, and Bahubali, with vines winding up around his legs. The static poses and swelling limbs of these impassive, standing images are typical of Early Chalukya Jain art. Enthroned Buddhist icons closely resembling the Jina figures just described were also produced in Early Chalukya times, but not one of these has survived in complete condition. The figure sculpted onto the rear wall of a natural cavern next to the lake in Badami has its face erased, suggesting a wilful suppression of Buddhism at some moment.

BASEMENT FRIEZES

Carvings on the basement of Early Chalukya temples also present animated figural compositions. Among the most common themes are the rows of pot-bellied, dwarfish *ganas* in playful, and even occasional obscene poses, such as those which enliven the basements of the Badami cave-temples. Similar *gana* dancers and musicians are found on the basements beneath wall panels inside the cave-temples, as well as beneath wall panels on structural temples, like the Upper Shivalaya above Badami and the nearby Malegitti Shivalaya. But basement courses are also vehicles for narrative compositions. Episodes from the Krishna legend, showing the childhood pranks and youthful adventures of the god, and select scenes drawn from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, adorn the basement of the Upper Shivalaya. Crowded courtly scenes with numerous royal figures surrounded by female companions, and of battles with armed warriors, some riding on horses and elephants, all now greatly worn and therefore unidentifiable, are found on the Mahakuteshvara and Mallikarjuna temples at Mahakuta. Basement friezes within the colonnaded verandah of the Aihole Durga temple include a number of *Ramayana* scenes showing Rama, Lakshman and Sita in their forest exile, as well as one unusual composition showing a ship with a curved prow transporting the heroes across a river. Other friezes here portray crowded scenes with groups of courtly figures, possibly referring to contemporary historical events. Porch basements on the larger Pattadakal temples are distinguished by their friezes of vigorously posed lions and elephants. Carved with striking naturalism, the animals are sometimes shown in violent combat, such as those on the entrance porch of the Papanatha temple. Elsewhere, basements incorporate friezes of elegant foliate motifs, both naturalistic and imaginative, sharply etched into the stone to catch the light, therefore animating the recessed mouldings onto which they are carved.

COLUMNS

Column shafts of temple interiors are enhanced with a wealth of ornamental and narrative reliefs. In the Badami cave-temples the columns have raised bands filled with looped and jewelled garlands hanging from monster masks, and roundels filled with bird and human torsos in fanciful foliate surrounds. Similar motifs grace the column shafts within the *mandapas* of structural temples. The outer faces of columns in temple porches are often the vehicles for amorous couples or maidens posed beneath trees, as may be seen on many monuments at Aihole. Here, too, there are repeated instances of a horse-headed woman with a male companion, possibly in illustration to a local legend, now forgotten. Couples and maidens also grace the columns of the larger temples at Pattadakal, both at entrance porches and within *mandapa* interiors. Such figures are richly costumed and jewelled, and wear elaborate hairdos, in what may be assumed to be replicas of contemporary courtly attire. Similarly dressed single maidens adorn the interior columns in the Pattadakal Kashivishvanatha and Papanatha temples.

Columns on either side of the entrance doorways to *mandapas* and sanctuaries are invariably carved with *dvarapalas*, sometimes sculpted in almost three dimensions, as in the larger Pattadakal temples. Sumptuously dressed and crowned, and leaning on heavy clubs, these guardians are shown with fierce facial expressions and even protruding fangs so as to ward off unwanted visitors. Sometimes *dvarapalas* are reduced to smaller figures in the company of river goddesses and female attendants, as beside the doorway pilasters within the porch of the Durga temple. Flying Garuda, depicted head on and clutching a pair of long cobra bodies that extend down between doorway jambs, is the ubiquitous theme in this context, invariably appearing on doorway lintels, even in Shaiva monuments. Secondary, shorter pilasters on either side of doorways sometimes support pairs of *makaras* with luxuriant tails, ridden by tiny figures, as in the porch of the Papanatha temple or the entrance to the vestibule leading to the Virupaksha sanctuary. Similar *makaras*, and sometimes even peacocks, elevated on pilasters surmount important wall niches, providing visual emphasis to the icons installed below. Nowhere is this better seen than in the matching wall panels of Trivikrama and Shiva appearing out of the *linga* on the Virupaksha temple, already noticed.

Column shafts are also the vehicles for legendary scenes, such as Ravana shaking Kailasa, Vishnu riding on Garuda, and Narasimha disembowelling his victim, all on the Virupaksha temple. In the Papanatha temple, the *Ramayana* and Kiratarjuniya stories on the *mandapa* wall panels, already noticed, reach a climax in the panels carved onto the entrance porches: notably, Rama's coronation in the presence of the monkeys; and Arjuna riding in a chariot, brandishing a sword in one hand. Additional narratives on the *mandapa* column shafts within the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna give full scope to the imagination of Early Chalukya artists. Figures include legendary heroes, male and female courtiers, and village workmen and ascetics, while settings vary from palace interiors to forest hermitages in rocky landscapes populated by wild animals and birds as well as lotus ponds. Story-telling techniques employ successive scenes arranged vertically in bands or compartments, or combined horizontally into friezes. This profusion of imagery also includes miniature divinities, dancing *ganas*, animals fighting, together with loved garlands and foliate motifs, both realistic and imaginative.

Among the legendary topics that appear in the *mandapa* columns of these two temples, a particular favourite is the churning of the cosmic ocean, versions of which are found in both the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna. Here, lines of gods and demons are arrayed on either side of the pole-like Mount Mandara supported on Vishnu's tortoise incarnation. The emphasis on Krishna and Kiratarjuniya stories, as well as episodes from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have already been mentioned. Scenes from these legends extend as bands across several faces of a column, sometimes even continuing onto one or more adjacent columns so as to achieve a visual narrative link.

FACING PAGE
Guardian leaning on a club; column sculpture in the north porch of the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal.

BRACKETS, BEAMS AND CEILING PANELS

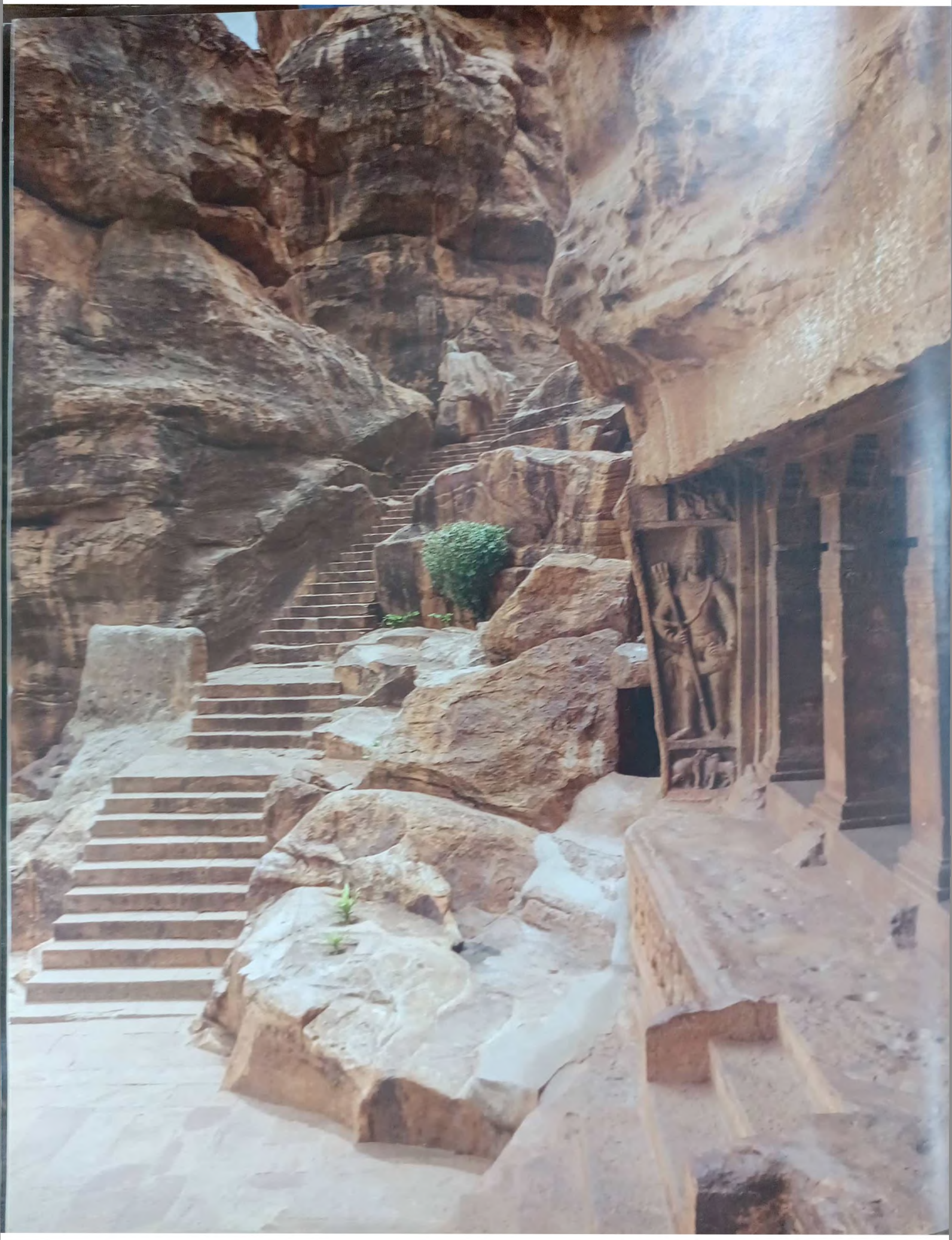
The upper portions of Early Chalukya temple interiors, notably brackets, beams and ceilings, are often vehicles for elaborate ornamentation, including full lotuses, half-blossoms, undulating stalks and fluted leafy designs. Brackets angling outwards from the columns of Cave 3 are fashioned as alluring maidens or couples in a variety of affectionate embraces, all posed beneath trees laden with flowers and fruits. The naturalism, charm and variety of these human figures are unsurpassed in Early Chalukya art. Elsewhere, in both rock-cut and structural monuments, beams are carried on brackets fashioned as open-mouthed *makaras* disgorging *yalis* or human torsos, sometimes even as fully modelled lions or elephant torsos. Beams and supporting brackets in the Papanatha are exceptionally intricate, as can be seen in the intricately worked animals, and the deeply cut scroll-like ornament.

Nowhere is the splendour of Early Chalukya plastic art better demonstrated than in the ceilings of temple interiors, both rock-cut and structural. The series begins with the ceilings of the Badami cave-temples showing a Nagaraja, with a human torso encircled by cobra coils, and wheel with fish spokes, in Caves 1 and 2 respectively. Cave 3's ceiling panels are exceptional for their iconographic range: Indra riding on the elephant, Shiva and Parvati on Nandi, Vishnu on Garuda, Brahma surrounded by the *dikpalas*, and Varuna with flying figures. Nagaraja and fish-wheel are repeated in the ceilings of the larger temples at Pattadakal, but here they appear together with Nataraja accompanied by Parvati, and Lakshmi between elephants with upraised trunks surrounded by a ring of lotus blossoms. In addition these subjects are the sole instances of Surya riding in the chariot surrounded by an aerial host, in the east porch of the Virupaksha, and Karttikeya on the peacock, in the Aihole Hucchimalligudi. The habit of combining Shiva with Parvati on Nandi, Vishnu asleep on Shesha, and Brahma on the goose, in a trio of matching panels over the central aisle of the *mandapa*, is already present in the Jambulinga temple in Badami. This same trio of divinities is repeated on the ceilings of several Aihole monuments, most notably in the well-preserved panels from the Hucchappayyagudi, now removed to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (Prince of Wales Museum), Mumbai.

Celestial couples, their legs kicked back in the act of flying through the air, are an appropriate motif for ceilings, and are already present in the Badami cave-temples. The finest examples, with the figures surrounded by billowing draperies and cloud formations, are those from the Durga temple verandah, now displayed in the National Museum, New Delhi.

RIGHT
Coiled Nagaraja; ceiling panel from Cave 1, Badami.

FACING PAGE
Flying couple; ceiling panel from the Durga temple, Aihole (now in the National Museum, New Delhi).



BADAMI

Identified with Vatapi, the capital of the Early Chalukya rulers from the middle of the 6th century until the middle of the 8th century, the town of Badami is picturesquely situated on the west bank of an artificial lake filled with greenish water, dammed by an earthen wall faced with stone steps. To the south and north are rugged, red sandstone bluffs, known today as 'forts', from the ramparts that crown their summits, added in later times. Four Early Chalukya period cave-temples are excavated into the northern face of the South Fort, two dedicated to Vishnu, one to Shiva, and the fourth to Jains. They are linked by a stepped path with intermediate terraces that offer spectacular views across the town and lake. The cave-temples are labelled 1 to 4 in an ascending series, but this numbering does not necessarily reflect the sequence in which they were excavated, only one example, Cave 3, being provided with an inscription giving a precise date, 578. These rock-cut monuments signal the beginnings of monumental architecture under Early Chalukya patronage, and are of considerable artistic distinction for their fine sculptures. Even though their relative chronology remains unknown they may all be assigned to the second half of the 6th century.

The North Fort, on the opposite side of the town, is penetrated by deep canyon-like crevices, through one of which climbs a stepped path. The first features to be seen along this path are two free-standing, multi-storeyed *mandapas*, seemingly unconnected with any temple. Possibly they are vestiges of an Early Chalukya ceremonial complex. The so-called Lower Shivalaya stands on a nearby rocky terrace, surveying the houses beneath. Beyond, at the summit of the North Fort, is the majestically sited Upper Shivalaya overlooking the town beneath. Both Shivalayas were probably erected in the first half of the 7th century, but appear to have been partly dismantled, perhaps by the conquering Pallava forces when they occupied Badami in the middle of the 7th century; alternatively, they may have been pillaged for building blocks to strengthen the North Fort by later occupiers. The ruinous condition of these two monuments contrasts markedly with the comparatively complete Malegitti Shivalaya, which crowns an isolated boulder beneath the western flank of the North Fort, partly out of view from the town. This temple may also be dated to the first half of the 7th century, and is of interest for its well-preserved wall carvings.

Another well-preserved Early Chalukya temple is the Bhutanatha, directly overlooking the water at the eastern end of the lake, where it is dramatically framed by distant sandstone bluffs. Partly obscured by additions and surrounded by minor shrines built later, the Bhutanatha belongs to the end of the Early Chalukya period, in the middle of the 8th century. Its roughly finished walls, tower and empty niches without sculptures suggest that it was abandoned in an unfinished state. The only Early Chalukya period monument standing within Badami itself is the Jambulinga. Commissioned in 699 by the queen-mother of Vijayaditya, the temple is located at the end of a narrow lane, almost totally concealed by town houses which partly encroach upon its outer walls. Partly dilapidated, it is occasionally used today as a school for local children.

Other religious monuments in and around Badami are assigned to the Rashtrakuta and Late Chalukya periods in the 9th–12th centuries and are not noticed here.

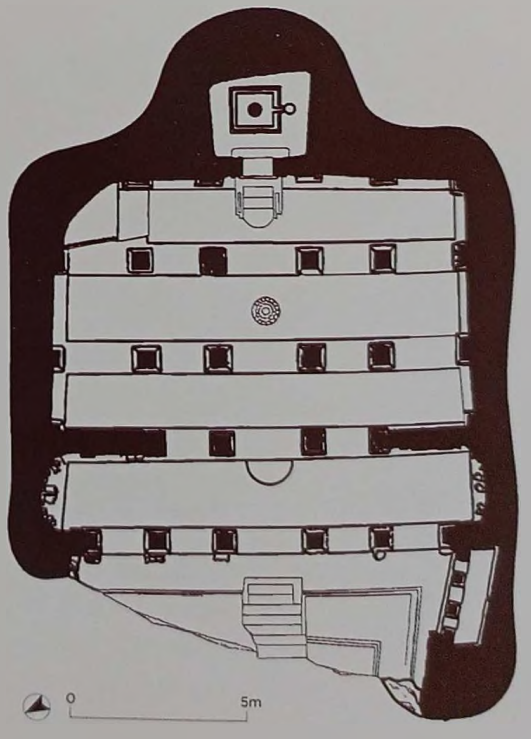
FACING PAGE
Steps leading up to the cave-temples in the South Fort above Badami.

CAVE 1

The dedication of this cave-temple is immediately apparent from the figures carved into the cliff face beside its five-bayed entrance. On the right, Shiva as Nataraja is portrayed with eighteen arms, many clutching weapons, such as axe and trident, and a drum. The god's rear two hands hold up a sinuous serpent; the other hands are arranged in diverse dance postures. The god is elaborately dressed and wears high matted hair that protrudes into an oval-shaped halo. Shiva is accompanied by diminutive Ganesha and Nandi. Immediately to the left of this composition is a small sub-shrine. The rear of this excavation is adorned with an icon of Mahishasuramardini. The goddess holds up the rump of the buffalo with one hand, while with the other she plunges a trident into his neck. Sculptures of Ganesha and of Karttikeya riding the peacock are carved onto the side walls. On the cliff face to the left of the entrance is a two-armed guardian holding a trident, and wearing a tall conical crown with a pleated halo behind. Beneath is a panel with an ingenious combination of an elephant-bull.

The four columns of the frame of the cave-temple's entrance are raised on a frieze of *ganas*. The interior has five rows of columns linked by slightly raised floor strips that create four transverse aisles. The second row of columns is partly enclosed by one bay at each end, so as to create an outer verandah. Imposing figures on the verandah's end walls portray matching, syncretic images of Shiva: to the right, Ardhanarishvara, accompanied by a female attendant holding up a jewel-casket, and Nandi and emaciated Bhringi; to the left, Harihara holding conch and axe with a snake, together with Lakshmi and Parvati. Column shafts throughout have cubical blocks adorned with medallions filled with foliate designs, as well as part-human torsos, animals and birds framed by lotus ornament. Bands beneath short octagonal sections are embellished with petalled and jewelled garlands, friezes of *hamsas*, or geese, and lotus stalks. The two free-standing columns in the second row are distinguished by the treatment of the upper parts of their shafts, which have circular fluted sections with curved profiles. The columns engaged into the walls at either side have additional part-circular fluted sections on their lower shafts. They abut pilasters treated as jambs, giving the triple-bayed opening of the second row the appearance of an expanded doorway. Brackets fashioned as open-mouthed *makaras* disgorging tiny human figures carry transverse beams. These divide the ceiling over the verandah into five bays. The central ceiling bay is adorned with a splendid Nagaraja, his human torso sheltered by five serpent hoods and encircled by serpent coils. Couples flying through the clouds, the males brandishing swords, are seen in the adjacent bays.

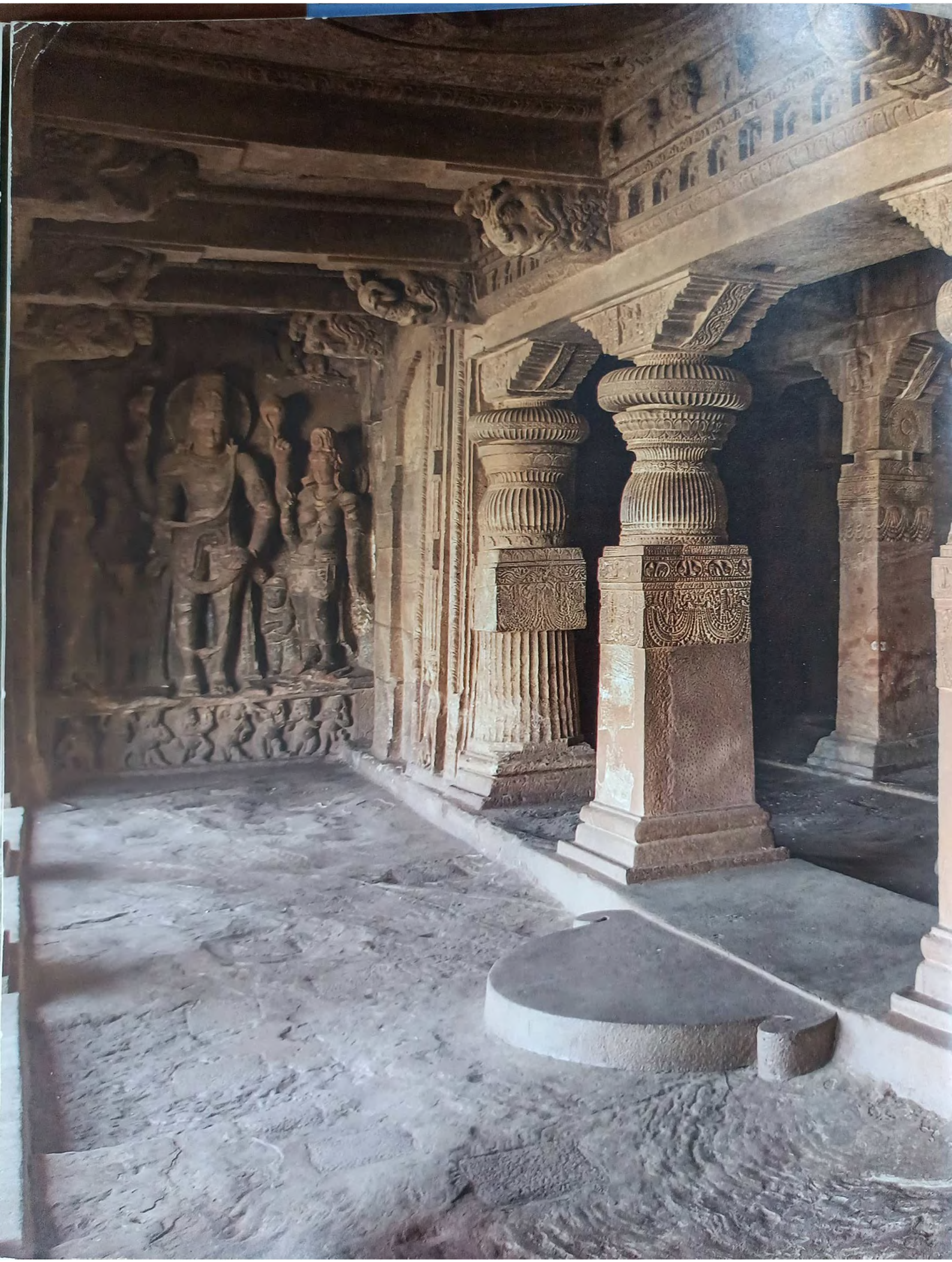
Cut into the rear wall of the cave-temple's interior is a doorway framed by fluted pilasters. This leads to a small square sanctuary with a monolithic *linga* on a *pitha*. A separately carved Nandi, possibly a later insert, is placed in front.



ABOVE
Dancing Shiva carved onto the cliff face outside Cave 1.

FACING PAGE
Plan of Cave 1.

FOLLOWING PAGES
Interior of Cave 1.



LEFT
Column details in Cave 1.

FACING PAGE
Shiva as Ardhanarishvara; wall panel in Cave 1.

ABOVE
Entrance to Cave 2 in the South Fort.

FACING PAGE
Plan of Cave 2.

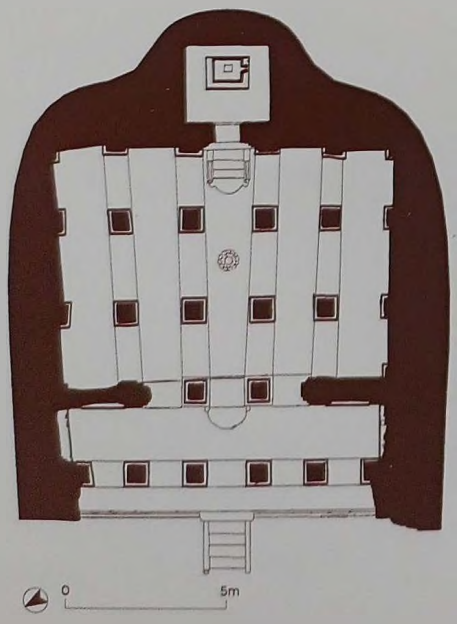
CAVE 2

This excavation is almost identical in layout and dimensions to Cave 1, but is consecrated to Vishnu. The column shafts, brackets and beams mostly resemble those of Cave 1, except for the second row of columns which have square fluted upper shafts and capitals, and for the raised floor strips linking the second to fifth rows, which run in line with the principal axis of the interior. In general, the relief decoration on the columns is not as diverse or as meticulously executed as that in Cave 1; nor are the sculpted panels as majestic as those of Cave 3, even though they depict some of the same subjects. In all likelihood Cave 2 is slightly later than these other two examples.

Figures either side of this cave-temple's five-bayed entrance depict two-armed guardians holding flowers rather than weapons. The line of *ganas* beneath continues as a frieze across the facade. The cliff face above is chiselled away as if to take eaves that were never completed. In contrast, the curved inner surface of the eaves is finished with timber-like ribs supported on *yali* brackets.

Sculpted panels occupy the end walls of the outer verandah: to the right, Trivikrama, with one leg kicked high, with the miniature son of Bali attempting to restrain the right leg of the god, and diminutive Vamana holding a parasol before the ascetic Shukracharya and Bali and his queen; to the left, Varaha rescuing Bhudevi, with a penitent *naga* below. Lines of *ganas* are seen beneath both compositions. The adjacent side walls have smooth surfaces, with tantalisingly faint traces of paintwork. Friezes high above the second row of columns show gods and battle scenes, the churning of the cosmic ocean, Gajalakshmi and figures, Brahma and figures, and Vishnu asleep on Shesha. The corresponding panels opposite, above the first row of columns, illustrate the birth of Krishna, and Krishna as a youth together with *gopis* and cows. The ceiling over the central bay of the verandah shows a wheel with sixteen fish spokes in a square frame. Ceiling compositions at either side are composed of continuous bands incorporating swastikas and flying couples. The end bays have a flying couple, and Vishnu on Garuda.

The doorway to the sanctuary cut into the rear wall of the cave-temple is framed by pilasters carrying an entablature with three blocks embellished with *gavaksha* ornament. The monolithic pedestal within has a socket to take a sculpted icon, now missing.



Wall panels in Cave 2

RIGHT
Vishnu as Varaha.

FACING PAGE
Vishnu as Trivikrama.

Ceiling panels in Cave 2

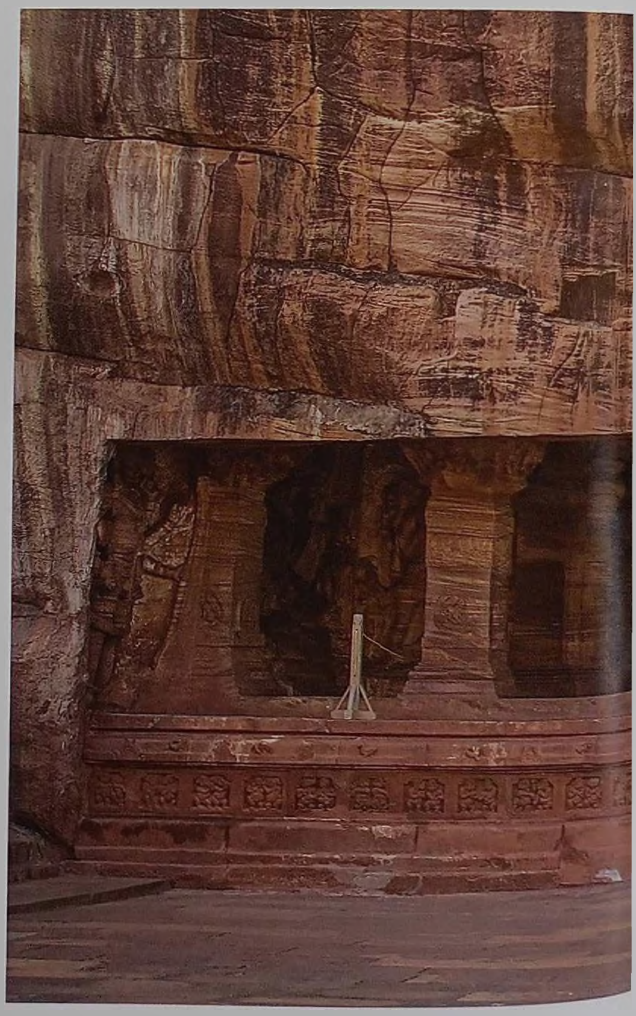
ABOVE
Swastikas with flying couples.

FACING PAGE
Wheel with fish spokes.

CAVE 3

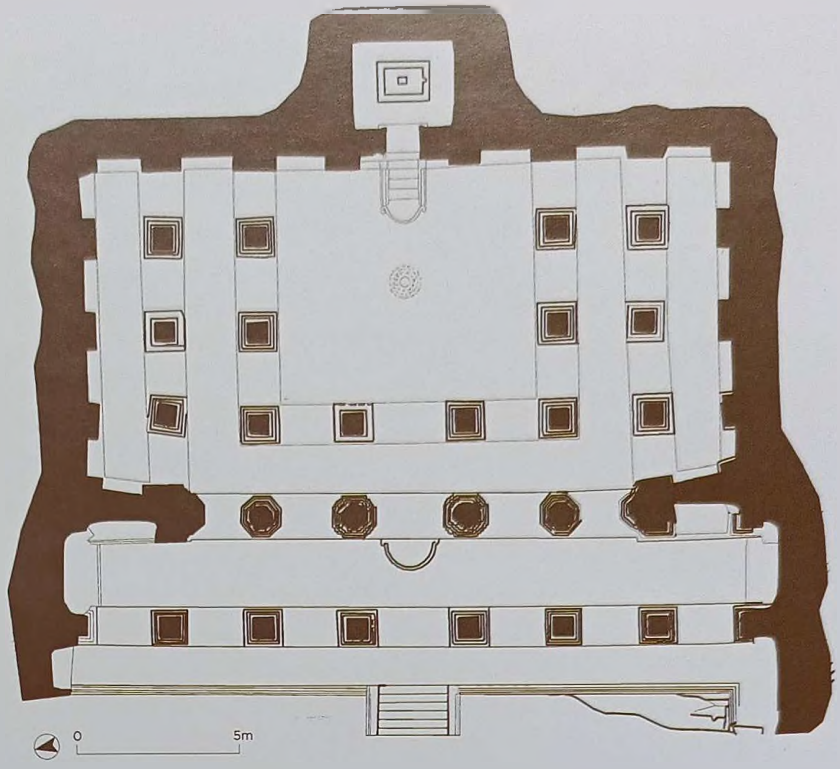
By far the most elaborate of the four Badami excavations, Cave 3 measures more than 20 metres across, almost double the dimensions of Caves 1 and 2. Its entrance is cut directly into the cliff face, which is unworked except for a line of incisions above, perhaps for beams of a wooden shelter, now vanished. The entrance is raised on a frieze of *ganas*, with pairs of impish dwarfs depicted in mischievous poses set between flat pilasters, and overhung by a *kapota* cornice, interrupted in the middle by a flight of steps (modern). (The *gana* frieze, cornice and supporting floor here are all fashioned from cut blocks laid against the excavated facade.) The cliff faces on either side of the entrance are enlivened with carved figures. On the right is a large-scaled composition showing Trivikrama with one leg kicked high, the foot pointed towards a monster mask; the eight arms hold various weapons, including mace, sword, shield and bow. The diminutive son of Bali clutches the god's right thigh, while to the right is a group consisting of diminutive Vamana (only his parasol survives) in front of Bali and his wife, preceded by Shukracharya. Opposite, on the shorter cliff face to the left, is a standing eight-armed Vishnu, also bearing weapons, with a small Narasimha torso emerging above the god's crown.

As in Caves 1 and 2, the outer colonnade of Cave 3 is conceived as a verandah between six free-standing columns in the first row, and columns engaged into side walls between four free-standing columns in the second row. Columns in the first row have their shafts embellished with medallions at the base containing miniature figures, with bands of diverse ornament above. The capitals are similarly square, but with curved profiles. Brackets angling upwards from the outer faces of the columns are fashioned as *ganas* topped by *yalis* with fierce heads with horns turned to one side. The heads connect to the deeply curved eaves within the cliff face. This is smoothly finished to receive a painted composition, of which only the barest traces can now be made out. (According to the graphic reconstruction of this scene displayed in the Badami Archaeological Museum, this composition portrayed a seated royal figure attended by courtly maidens and musicians, in an elaborate palace setting.) In the middle of the curved surface, over the central bay of the cave-temple's entrance, is a sculpted representation of Garuda, with a beak-like nose and outstretched wings. Brackets angling outwards from the two side faces of the columns of the first row are carved with human couples in affectionate embraces; the brackets from the inner faces show single maidens. All these figures are posed variously beneath lush foliage and fruit-bearing trees.



RIGHT
Entrance to Cave 3 in the South Fort.

FACING PAGE ABOVE
Plan of Cave 3.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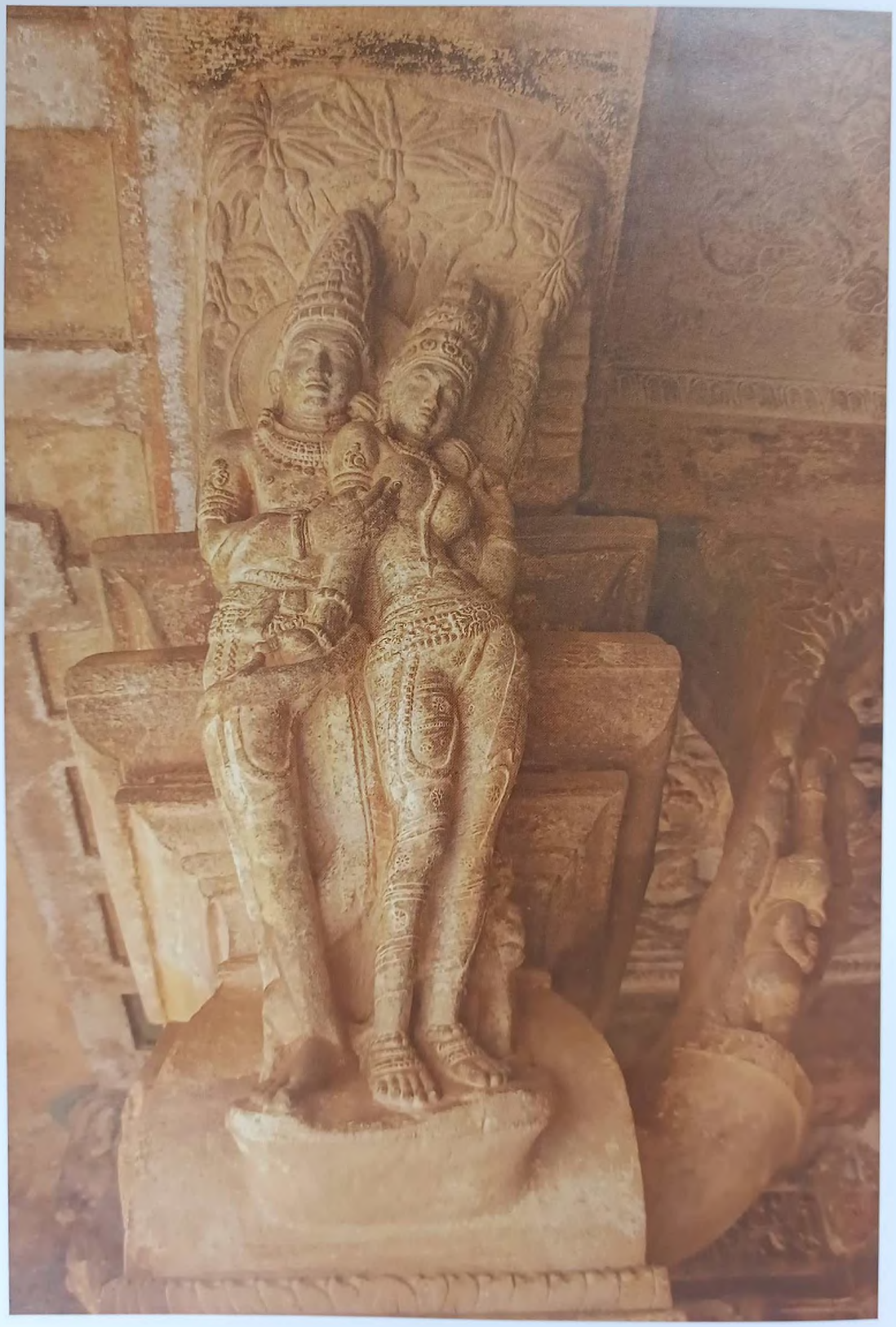
Wall panels in Cave 3

LEFT
Eight-armed standing Vishnu.

FACING PAGE
Vishnu as Trivikrama.



Column brackets in Cave 3

ABOVE AND FACING PAGE
Human couples embracing beneath trees.

The end walls of Cave 3's verandah, like the verandahs of Caves 1 and 2, have imposing sculpted deities. To the right is four-armed, fierce-headed Narasimha leaning weightily on the club (damaged), with Garuda and Prahlada below, and flying couples above. On the adjacent side wall is Harihara holding axe and conch, the headdress clearly divided into Shiva's matted hair and Vishnu's crown. On the left is Vishnu as Vaikuntha, seated on the coils of Shesha, the serpent's hoods sheltering the god's crowned head. On the adjacent side wall is Varaha rescuing Bhudevi, one foot placed firmly on the coils of the serpent demon. The engaged column immediately to the right of Varaha is engraved with the inscription of Mangalesha, half-brother of Kirttivarma I, in Sanskrit language, but Kannada script. This records the consecration of the monument on the full-moon day of the month Kartika, Shaka 500, equivalent to 1 November 578.

The engaged columns at the ends of the second row, together with the two outer free-standing columns, all have octagonal basements, sixteen-sided shafts, and deeply fluted upper circular shafts and similarly shaped double capitals. The two central free-standing columns in the second row have square shafts with multiple facets that are carried up into the curved capitals. Shallow long panels above the columns have friezes. Those above the first row of columns show scenes from the life of Krishna, with cows and *gopis*, the story of Kiratarjuniya, as well as Narasimha, and sleeping Vishnu. The panels opposite, above the second row of columns depict various deities, including a representation of the churning of the cosmic ocean. Brackets with rolled ends carry transverse beams that divide the ceiling of the outer aisle into seven bays. The left-hand ceiling shows a figure with a club, most likely Kubera. Five of the ceilings in the other bays show seated deities set in circular frames surrounded by an accessory of figures. From left to right, these portray Indra on the elephant, with dancers and musicians; Shiva and Parvati on Nandi with *ganas*; Vishnu with the *dikpalas* (over the central bay); Brahma with four *lokapalas* and four pairs of ascetics; and Varuna with flying celestials.

All the other columns in Cave 3 have square shafts with short part-octagonal sections. The interior of the excavation deviates from the previous schemes. Here a central nine-bayed hall with a lotus carved into the middle of the floor is surrounded by columns linked by raised floor strips. The ceiling above echoes the nine-bayed layout, with Brahma on the *hamsa* in the middle, surrounded by Karttikeya, Agni, Indra and Varuna, and four flying couples. Set into the middle of the rear wall of the hall is a doorway framed by pilasters, some with fluted shafts, set into geometric or lotus ornament. The doorway is headed by eaves with a *kuta-shala-kuta* pediment. The monolithic pedestal within the sanctuary lacks an icon, presumably of Vishnu.

LEFT
Courtly women; detail of mural fragment on the eave inside Cave 3.

FACING PAGE ABOVE
Flying Garuda; carving on the eave inside Cave 3.

FACING PAGE BELOW
Seated Vishnu surrounded by the *dikpalas*; ceiling panel in Cave 3.

Wall panels in Cave 3

LEFT
Vishnu as Narasimha.

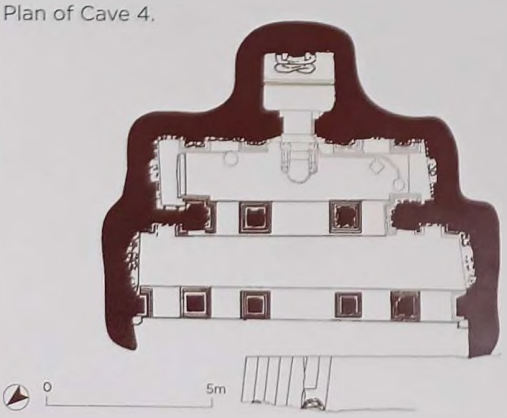
FACING PAGE
Vishnu as Vaikuntha seated on the snake Shesha.

Wall panels in Cave 4

ABOVE
Parshvanatha.

FACING PAGE
Bahubali, with legs entwined in vines.

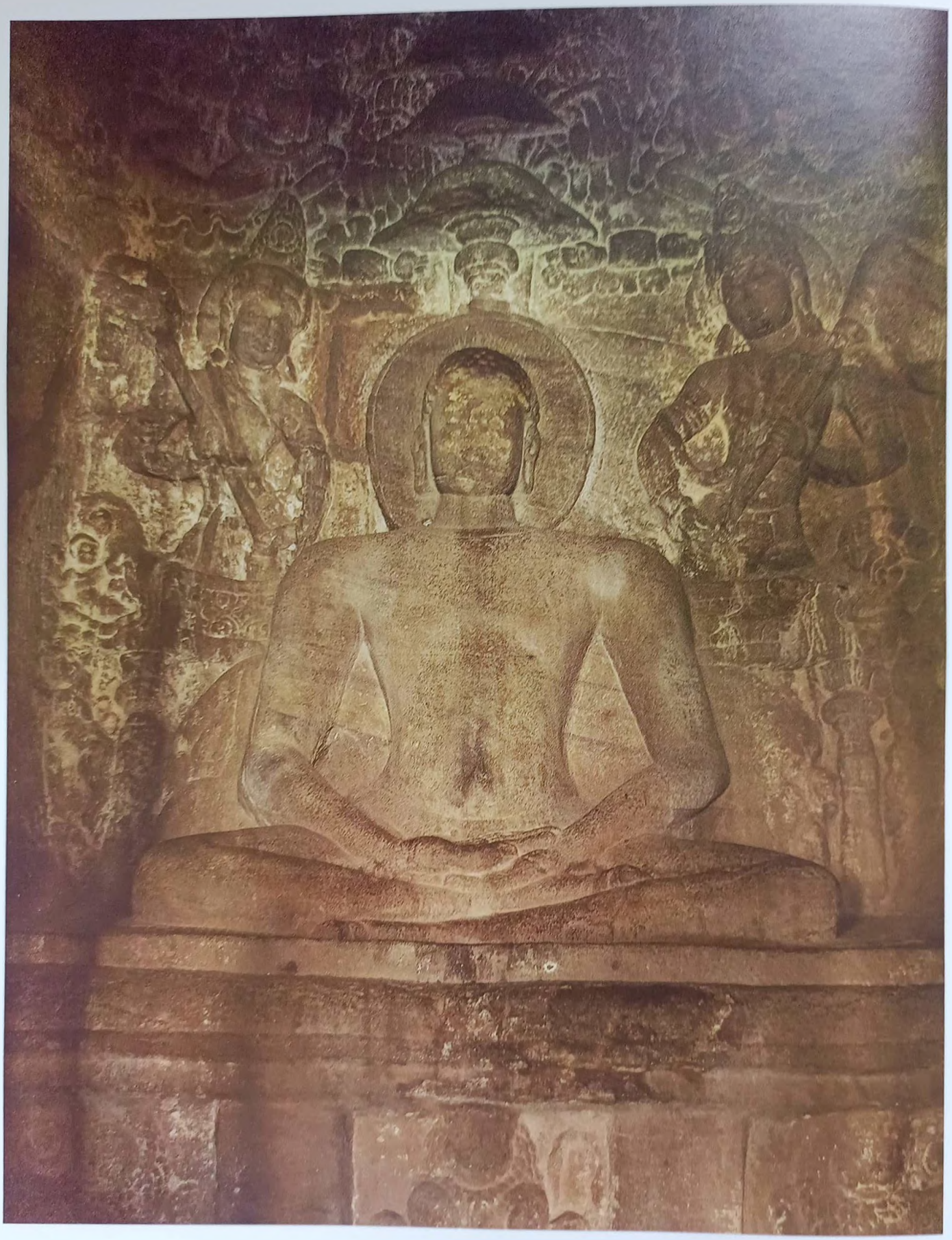
BELOW
Plan of Cave 4.



CAVE 4

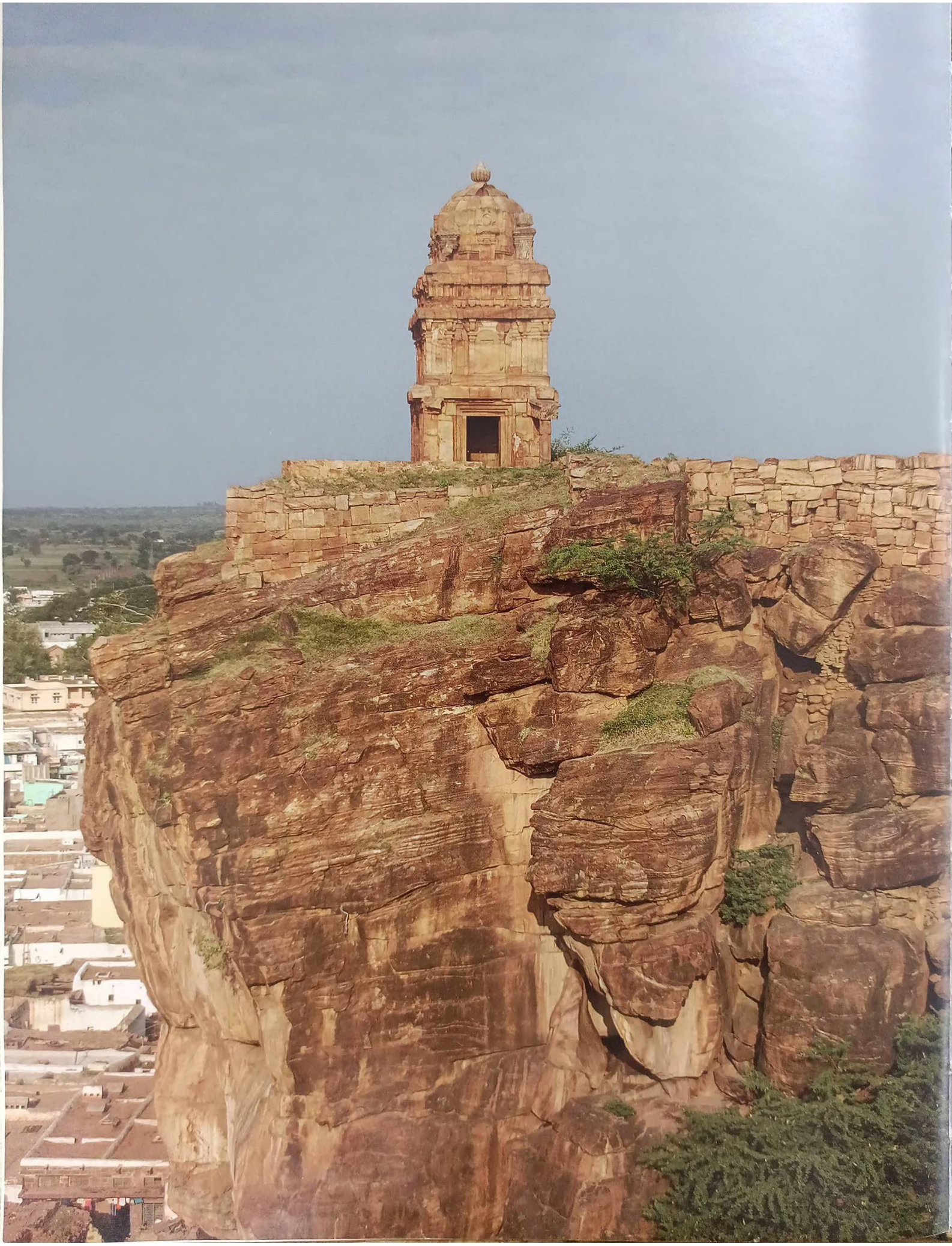
The highest, and possibly the latest, of Badami's excavations, Cave 4 was originally accessed from the lake by an independent flight of steps (now mostly collapsed). The cave-temple is smaller in scale and less finely finished than the other three examples, and is the only Jain monument of the Early Chalukya period in Badami town. That worship continued here into the 11th-12th centuries is evident from the numerous Jina figures engraved in shallow relief onto its columns and walls.

The cave-temple presents a five-bayed entrance with square columns adorned with medallions at the base and square capitals, with curved profiles above. Brackets fashioned as *yalis* support the curved interior of the overhang over the entrance, with seated, pot-bellied Kubera in the middle. As in the other cave-temples the first aisle is treated as a verandah. The end walls have panels depicting Parshvanatha (right), his head shielded by multi-cobra hoods, and Bahubali (left), with stalks and snakes winding around his lower legs, accompanied by his sisters Sundari and Brahmi. *Makara* brackets spewing miniature human torsos carry transverse beams that divide the ceiling into bays, with a flying couple in the middle. The remainder of Cave 4's interior is reduced to a single, triple-bayed vestibule. Balustraded steps in the rear wall lead to a small sanctuary with an icon of Mahavira carved onto its rear wall. This shows the saviour seated on a lion throne, flanked by *chamara*-bearing attendants, and surmounted by a triple-tiered parasol and flying figures. The Mahavira icon closely resembles an enthroned Buddha within a natural cavern beside the lake. Buddha wears a cloak, and holds up one hand in the gesture of protection; a *pipal* tree is seen over the halo.



ABOVE
Mutilated figure of seated Buddha; carving in a cavern at the end of the lake at Badami.

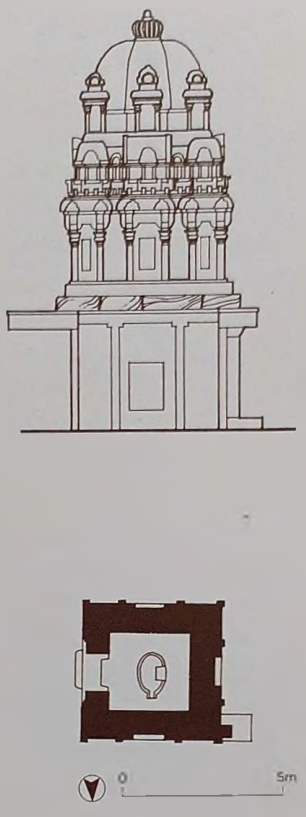
FACING PAGE
Seated Mahavira; panel in the sanctuary of Cave 4.



LOWER SHIVALAYA

Only the towered sanctuary of this temple survives, its outer walls having been altogether dismantled. Stumps of beams with friezes of *ganas* and broken roof slabs set into its walls indicate that the sanctuary was originally surrounded by a passageway on three sides, possibly with a *mandapa* extension to the east.

The sanctuary doorway is framed by bands of lotus ornament, with diminutive dwarf-like guardians bearing tridents beneath at either side. An unusual, elliptical-shaped pedestal, now empty, is seen within. The outer sanctuary walls have flat pilasters but there are no projections or sculpture niches. The tower that rises above has pilastered walls with shallow projections, eaves, and parapet with corner *kutas* and central *shalas*. The roof is an octagon-to-dome topped by a tiny *amalaka* finial. It is framed by corner model elements topped by *kuta* roofs containing miniature *nidhis*. Similar *kuta*-roofed elements are positioned in between.



ABOVE
Plan and elevation of the Lower Shivalaya.

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The Lower Shivalaya perched on a bluff of the North Fort above Badami.

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UPPER SHIVALAYA

The outer walls of this temple, complete on the south and west only, create a rectangle containing a sanctuary with a passageway on three sides, opening into a columned *mandapa* on the east, now missing all of its internal columns. A basement, partly rock-cut, with elephant and lion torsos, indicates a frontal porch. The walls are raised on a basement with a central recessed course divided into panels containing foliate ornament and narrative scenes. On the south face these show *Ramayana* episodes, such as the waking of Kumbhakarna, Rama shooting an arrow through seven palm trees, Rama fighting with forest enemies, and Ravana surrounded by his demonic host. The panels on the west face are dedicated to the birth and childhood of Krishna, including Krishna sucking at Putana's breast, and Krishna as a youth, fighting animal adversaries. (No narratives are seen on the north.) These basement panels are overhung by a *kapota* cornice, with miniature faces peering out of *kudus*. The walls above have narrow projections created by pairs of pilasters carried up into the parapet, four on the south, and three on the west. The central pilastered projections on the passageway walls have panels depicting Krishna lifting Mount Govardhana, flanked by cows (south), Krishna trampling the serpent Kaliya (west), and Narasimha disembowelling his victim (north). Intermediate projections, three on the south and two on the west, are defined by secondary pairs of pilasters. These support miniature eaves and *kudus*, the latter intruding in the *kapota* eaves that run around the walls.

The square tower over the sanctuary has pilastered walls, eaves and parapet that repeat those of the walls beneath. It is crowned by a large *kuta*, without finial, the earliest and best preserved example of this type of Dravida styled roof in Early Chalukya architecture. The sanctuary doorway is unfinished, in contrast to the pilasters on its outer walls, within the passageway. An empty, broken pedestal is seen within.

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FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Upper Shivalaya.

BELOW
The Upper Shivalaya at the summit of the North Fort, from the north-east.

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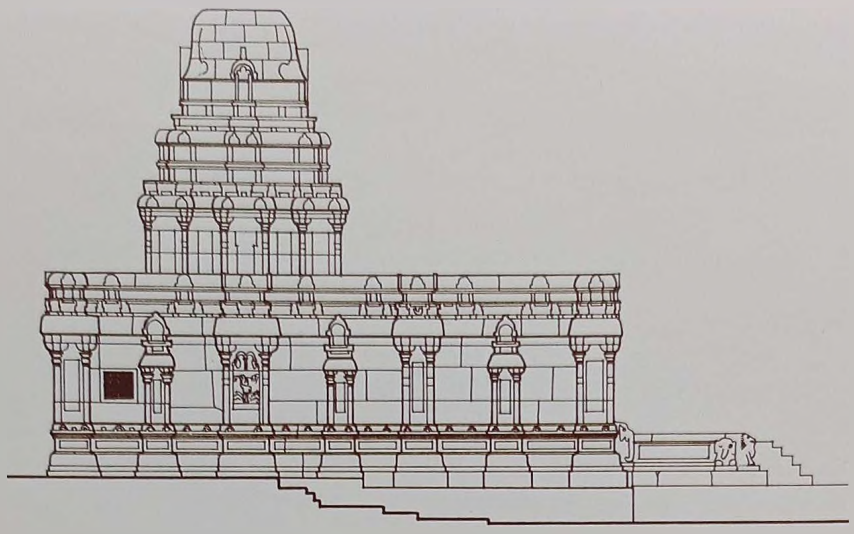

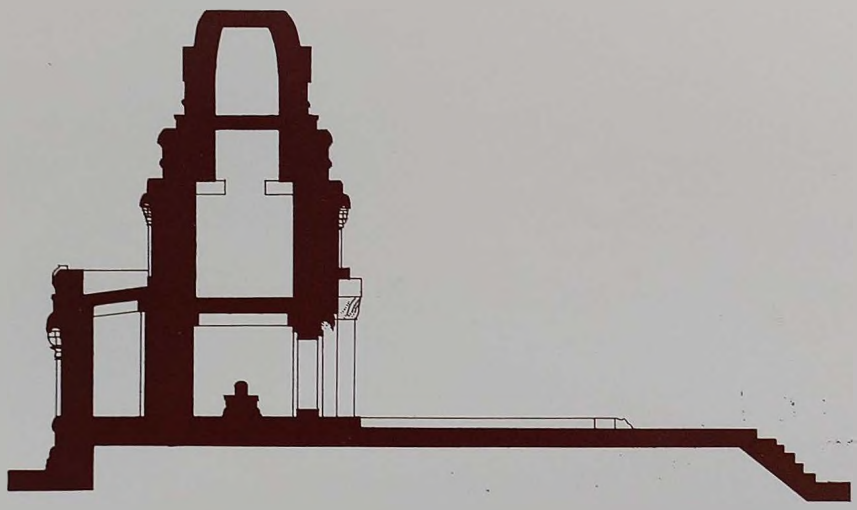

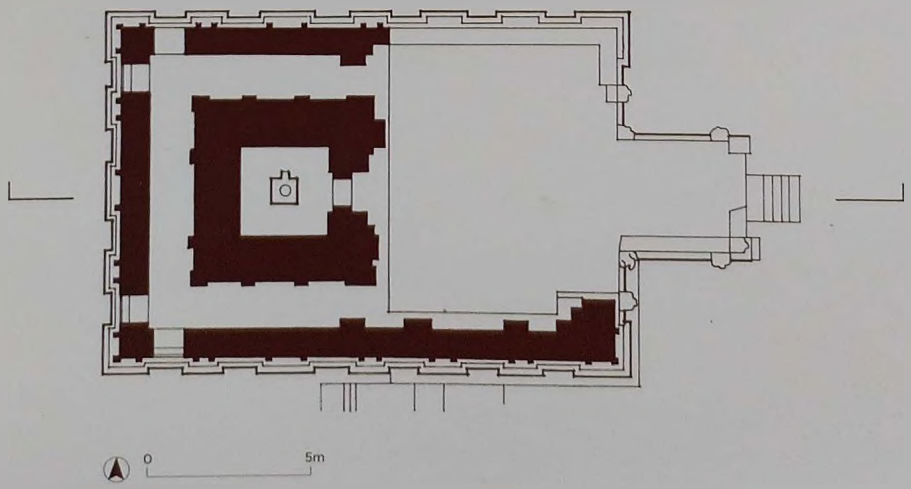
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Basement details and wall panel on the Upper Shivalaya

RIGHT
Krishna holding up Mount Govardhana.

FACING PAGE ABOVE
Sleeping Kumbhakarna being awakened by an elephant; a scene from the *Ramayana*.

FACING PAGE BELOW
Seated Ravana surrounded by his demonic host; a scene from the *Ramayana*.

MALEGITTI SHIVALAYA

This temple is the most complete, earliest surviving example of the Dravida style in Early Chalukya architecture. In plan it consists of a sanctuary, without passageway, opening into a triple-aisled *mandapa*, entered through a small porch. Pilastered walls of the sanctuary and *mandapa* are raised on a continuous basement. This has a curved course, and a central recessed portion divided by shallow pilasters into panels, some filled with *gana* musicians, dancers and warriors. The basement is topped by a *kapota* cornice adorned with jewelled bands and filled with human heads, and an animal frieze. The sanctuary walls are provided with three pilastered projections on the west, but only two complete projections on the north and south, since here the walls abut those of the *mandapa*. The *mandapa* walls have three projections on the north and south, those in the middle being wider so as to accommodate panels portraying Shiva (south) and Vishnu (north). Each god has four arms displaying characteristic emblems in the rear two hands: trident and snake for Shiva, disc and conch for Vishnu, all with emerging miniature *purushas*. Each god is accompanied by a pair of diminutive companions. Perforated windows set into the wall recess at either side are framed by pairs of secondary pilasters. These carry open-mouthed *makaras* with miniature riders linked by looped garlands. The *mandapa* walls beside the porch each have a corner pilastered projection and a single niche containing a swaying *dvarapala*. As in the windows just noticed, the secondary pilasters framing these guardians carry *makaras* and garlands. Only the *dvarapala* on the south bears a sword.

The walls of both the sanctuary and *mandapa* are overhung by continuous *kapota* eaves on a frieze of *ganas*. These carry the ends of the internal roof slabs, blocked out as if to receive animal carvings, interspersed with water spouts on the *mandapa*. Two recessed mouldings support a parapet, with a set of corner *kutas* and central *shalas* over the *mandapa* walls, and a similar, but slightly truncated, *kuta-shala-kuta* parapet over the sanctuary walls. The tower that rises over the sanctuary has pilastered walls with a similar but smaller parapet. Above rises the octagon-to-dome roof, exactly like that of the Upper Shivalaya, but without its *amalaka* finial. The roof is framed by corner model elements topped by *kuta* roofs containing miniature *nidhis*. Similar *kuta*-roofed elements are positioned in between.

The *mandapa* interior has a central east-west aisle, defined by raised floor strips linking the free-standing and engaged columns. Two additional engaged columns, with square, curved capitals and rolled brackets with *yalis*, define a small bay in front of the sanctuary doorway. Elsewhere the columns have undecorated bands and part-circles, without capitals, but with rolled brackets. Beams carry an entablature over the central aisle treated as a pilastered course topped by *kutas* and *shalas*. Transverse beams carried on open-mouthed *makara* brackets carry the raised and horizontal roof slabs, with Vishnu on flying Garuda carved onto the central bay. Roof slabs over the north and south aisles are lower and sloping. The sanctuary doorway is framed by jambs, including those with serpent bodies culminating in a flying Garuda over the lintel, with male and female figures beneath at either side. A parapet-like entablature is seen above. A narrow wall recess immediately to the left of the sanctuary doorway is filled with a male guardian armed with a club. He suppresses a smaller figure with a female torso and horse body, sometimes interpreted as Chhaya, the substitute wife of Surya, who was punished. A *linga* on a pedestal, perhaps replacing a sculpted icon, is seen within the sanctuary.

FACING PAGE
Shiva panel on the south wall of the temple.

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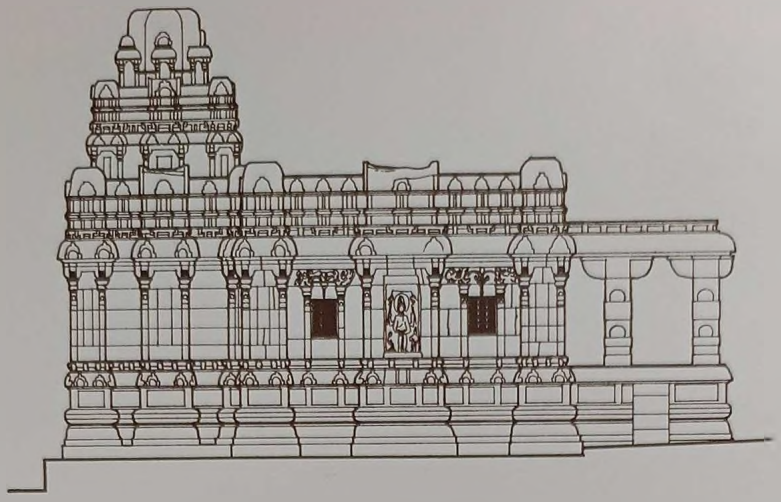
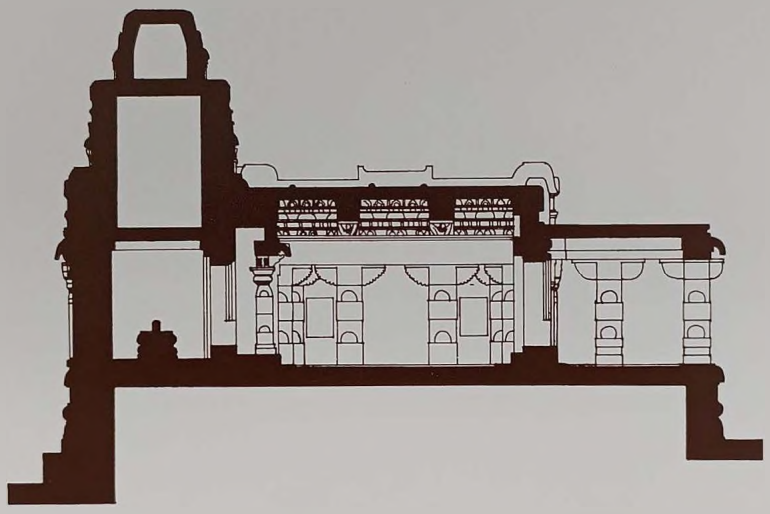
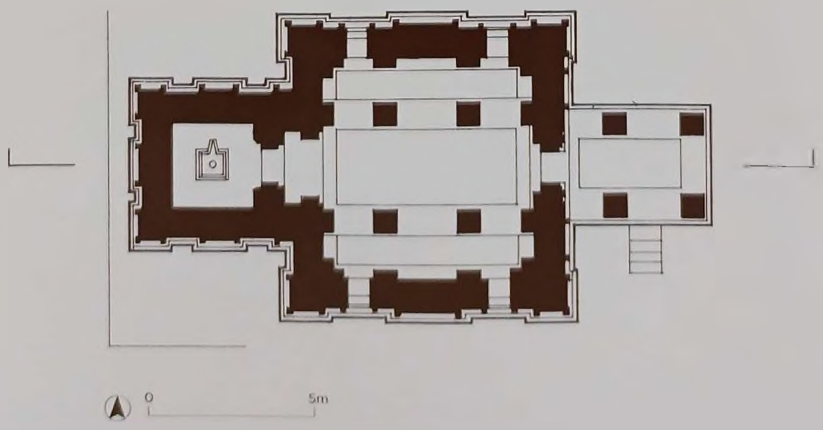
Plan, section and elevation of the Malegitti Shivalaya.

FOLLOWING PAGE RIGHT
The Malegitti Shivalaya from the south-east.



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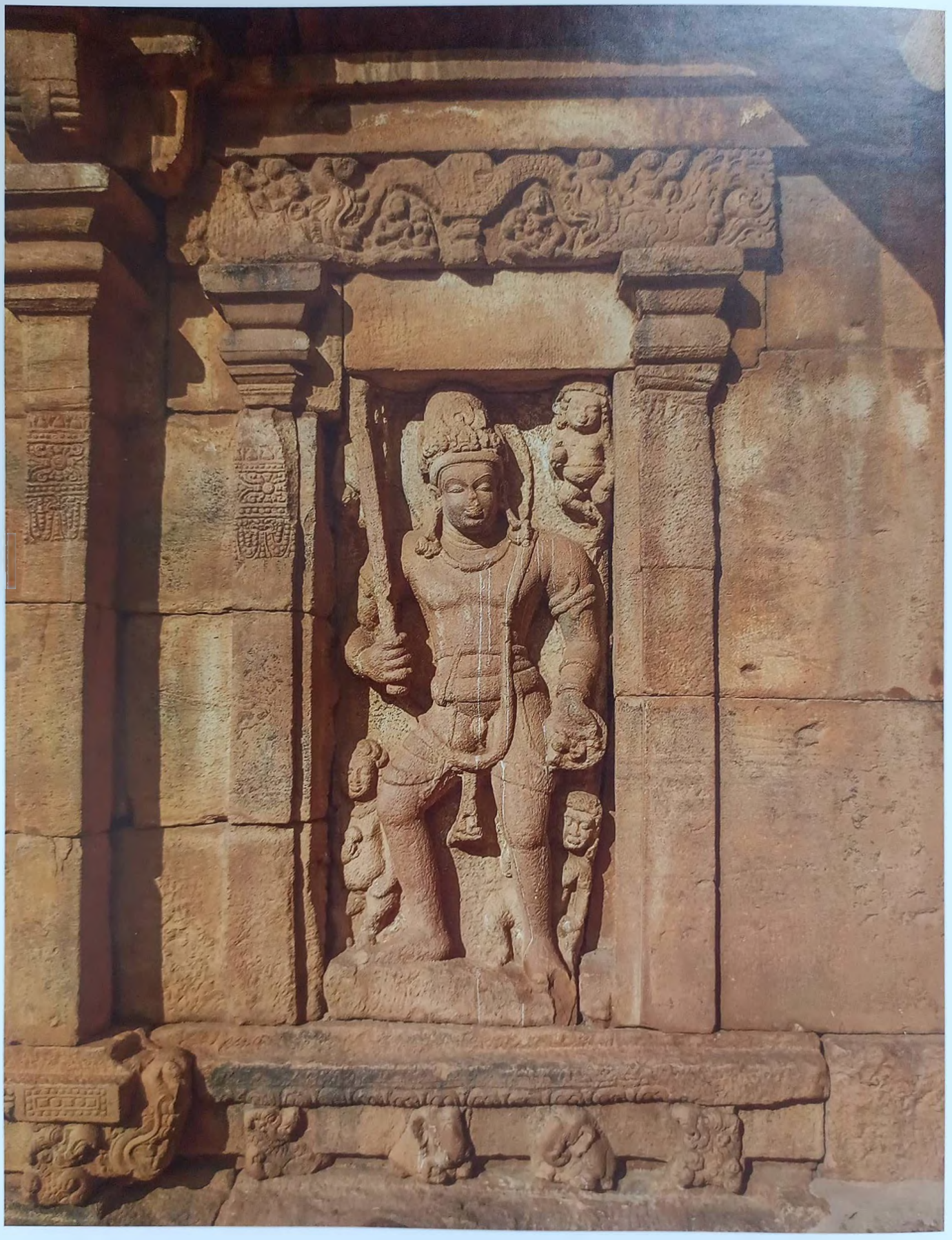

Basement details and wall panel on the Malegitti Shivalaya

ABOVE
Gana warriors, musicians and dancers.

FACING PAGE
Guardian brandishing a sword.

JAMBULINGA TEMPLE

An inscription dated 699 engraved onto a column in the porch of this temple records that Vinayavati, the surviving queen of Vinayaditya, here installed for worship the images of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara (Shiva). This is explained by the layout of the monument, which has three small square sanctuaries opening off a common *mandapa*, approached through an open porch with balcony seating on three sides. This scheme is unique in Early Chalukya temple architecture.

The temple's outer walls are raised on a basement with a central faceted moulding, partly cut out of the rocky shelf on which the temple stands. The walls on three sides of each of the sanctuaries and at the corners of the *mandapa* are plain, except for pairs of (inserted) pilasters carrying pediments with *gavaksha* designs, but also with *shalas* showing curved half-vaults (either side of the porch). Tiny windows are set into the *mandapa* walls. Plain *kapota* eaves terminate the walls, and there is fragmentary evidence of a parapet with shallow *shalas*. No Early Chalukya period towers are preserved over the three sanctuaries, though these surely would have been intended, but whether of the Nagara *shikhara* type or Dravida multi-storeyed type cannot be determined.

The *mandapa* columns have raised bands with part-circles, and brackets with rolled ends. These carry beams, the undersides with lotus medallions filled with flying figures bearing swords, between bands of foliate ornament. The beams define a central east-west aisle, roofed with raised horizontal slabs embellished with ceiling panels: from east to west these show Vishnu seated in a diagonal frame, Brahma with animated sages, and Shiva and Parvati on flying Nandi. The two aisles on both the north and south are roofed with sloping slabs, but here too there are ceiling panels: a wheel with fish spokes surrounded by the *dikpalas* over the bay in front of the north sanctuary, and a nine-square composition with swastikas and flying figures in a corresponding position in front of the south sanctuary. It is worth noting that this range of ceiling compositions is unsurpassed in any other Early Chalukya temple. The sanctuary doorways are framed by pilasters carrying eaves, with Garuda over the lintels and guardians beneath at either side. Only the west sanctuary doorway has an entablature with *kutas* and *shalas*. The *linga* within does not appear original. The other two sanctuaries are empty.

A triple-bayed opening framed by full and engaged columns with square, curved capitals links the *mandapa* to the entrance porch. Jambs at either side have seated *nidhis* at the base. Columns and beams of the same type as the *mandapa* carry raised horizontal slabs over the two central bays of the porch. These too have ceiling panels showing Nagaraja with a coiled serpent body, and a twelve-square composition with lotuses alternating with celestial couples. The surrounding bays on three sides are roofed with sloping slabs.

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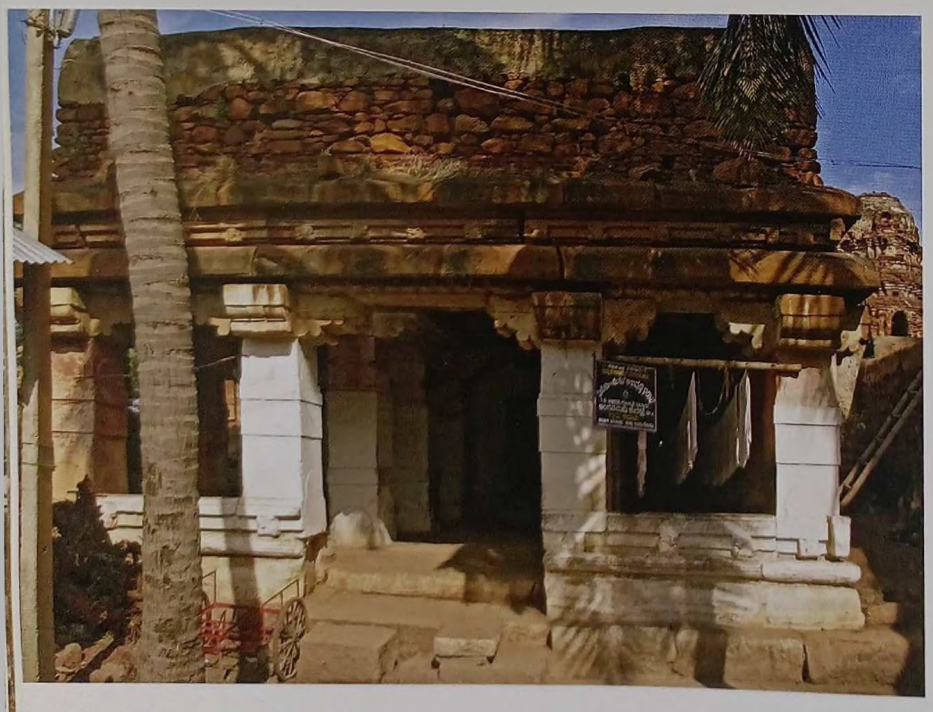
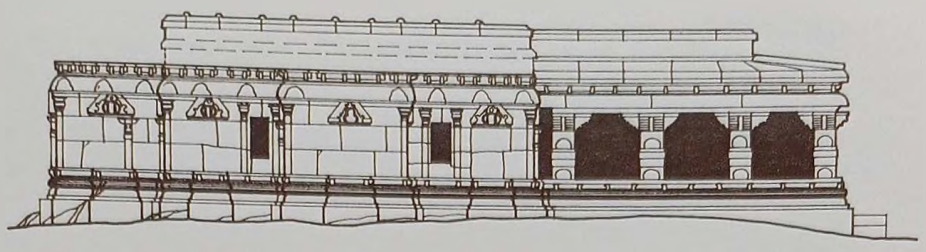
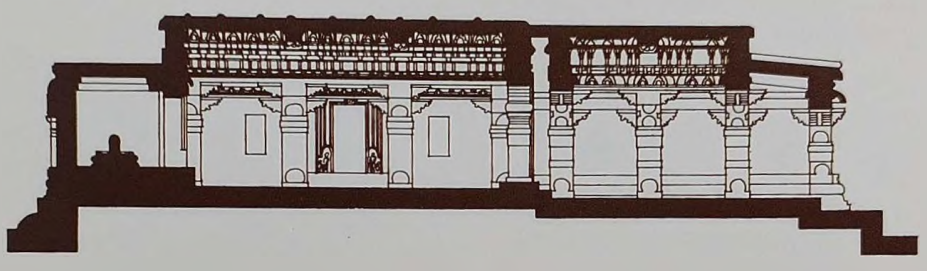
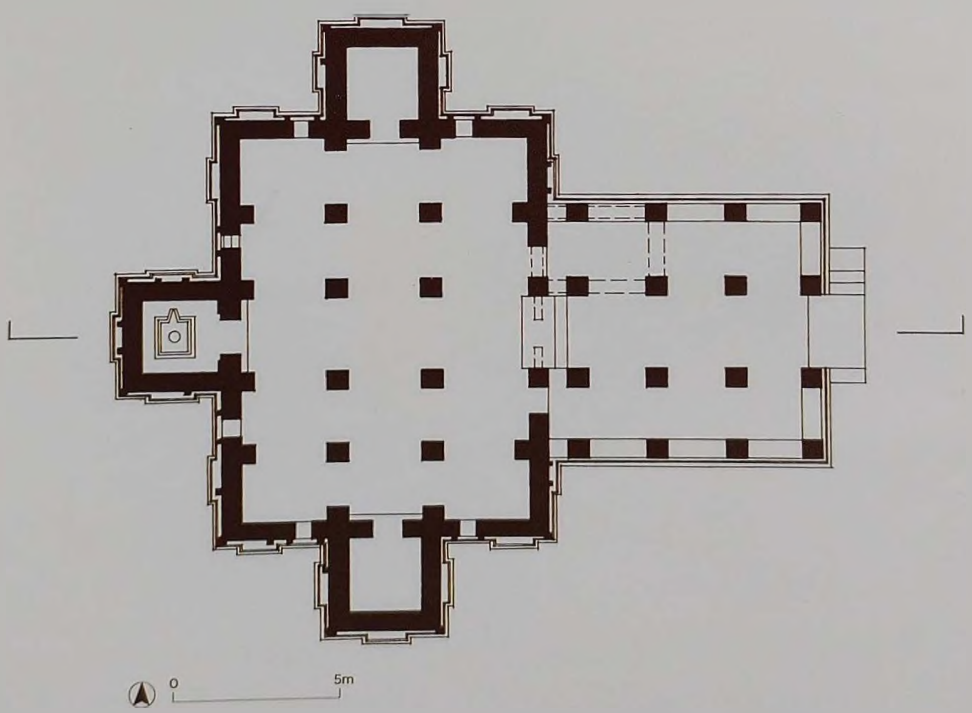
Plan, section and elevation of the Jambulinga temple.

BELOW
Entrance to the temple.





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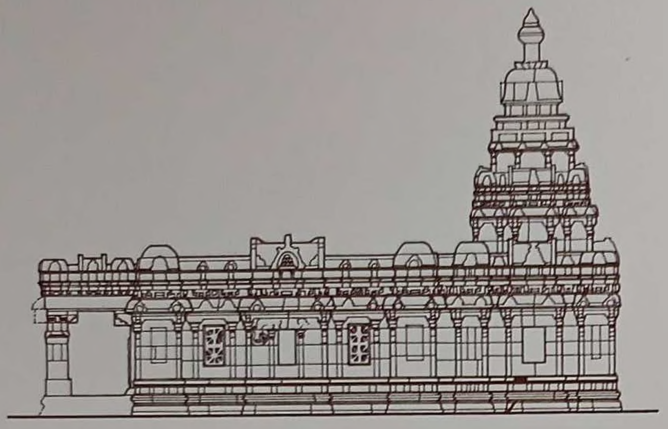

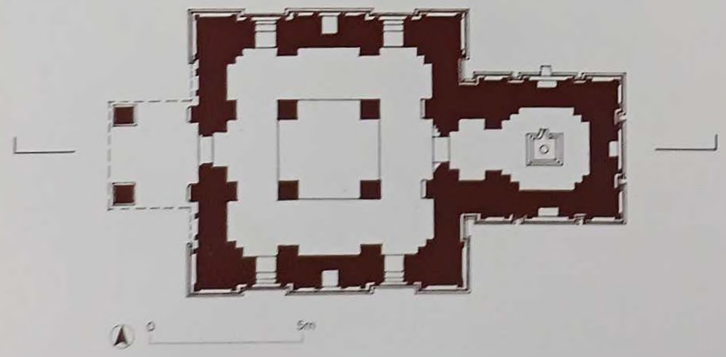

BHUTANATHA TEMPLE

This temple comprises of a sanctuary preceded by a vestibule, a triple-aisled *mandapa*, and a small porch now engulfed in a later, larger open porch accommodating a Nandi. The outer walls, raised on a basement with a central part-octagonal course, present three wider projections framing two narrower projections on three sides of the sanctuary, and three projections, the central ones wider, on the north and south sides of the *mandapa*. Central projections on both the sanctuary and *mandapa* walls have deep niches to take sculpted panels, but these are empty. Two panels with unfinished, rudimentary carvings, now placed at the back of the temple, may have been intended for these niches. The *mandapa* niches are emphasised by secondary pilasters carrying pediments, but never completed. Perforated stone windows with geometric designs are seen at either side. The walls are overhung by *kapota* eaves with *kudus*, and a parapet with corner *kutas* and central *shalas*. The somewhat steep pyramidal tower over the sanctuary is two-storeyed. The lower storey has pilastered walls with triple projections and a *kuta-shala-kuta* parapet; the upper storey is reduced to pilastered walls without projection or parapet. The tower is roofed by *kuta* topped with *amalaka* and *kalasha* finials. All of the architectural elements just described are finished in blocked-out form, but lack carved detail. This suggests that some circumstance interrupted the project. It is possible that this coincided with the demise of the Early Chalukyas in the middle of the 8th century.

Columns within the temple's *mandapa*, with bands and part-circles on their shafts, and brackets with rolled ends carry transverse beams over the central aisle. The raised horizontal roof slabs lack ceiling panels, slabs over the side aisles are sloping. The sanctuary doorway has a pair of pilasters carrying eaves on a frieze of *hamsas*, with blocked-out parapet elements above. Female figures, perhaps river goddesses, with parasol-holding attendants are seen beneath at either side. Columns flanking the *mandapa* doorway once had *dvarapalas* holding tridents, but these were erased.

LEFT
Towered sanctuary of the Bhutanatha temple.

FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Bhutanatha temple.

FOLLOWING PAGES
The Bhutanatha temple overlooking the lake.

MAHAKUTA

Located in a lush forest grove beneath a sandstone rocky outcrop, less than 5 kilometres east of Badami, the *tirtha* takes its name from the shrine dedicated to Mahakuteshvara, which dates back to Early Chalukya times but is still a popular pilgrimage destination. The Mahakuteshvara dominates a complex of lesser temples consecrated to Shiva, all facing towards a rectangular tank fed by a perpetual natural spring. The temples stand in a paved compound partly surrounded by walls (mostly modern), with a small gate on the east. Those structures belonging to this period are built in a variety of architectural idioms and are supplied with several fine sculptures.

That Mahakuta received royal patronage under the Early Chalukyas is confirmed by the edict of Mangalesha engraved on a fluted sandstone pillar discovered fallen on the ground outside the compound (now removed to the Archaeological Museum in Bijapur). Dated 597, in the fifth year of the king's reign, the edict records a grant to 'Makuteshvaranatha'. Though this early date cannot be applied to the present-day Mahakuteshvara temple, it may relate to the small *chatur-mukha linga* sheltered by a pavilion standing in the middle of Mahakuta's tank (see illustration on page 4). This smoothly finished *linga* is framed by four faces of the god, each with sharply engraved eyes and eyebrows, a vertical third eye, long ears with earrings, and jewelled tresses, in one instance incorporating a crescent moon. All the Early Chalukya temples at Mahakuta lack inscriptions; nonetheless, they are here all assigned to the second half of the 7th and first half of the 8th centuries.

The Mahakuteshvara is the most important example of the Early Chalukya Dravida idiom that was developed in the Badami region after the expulsion of the Pallavas. It signifies a substantial advance on the early phase Dravida temples in Badami and Aihole, while at the same time anticipating the final, climactic phase Dravida style of the Pattadakal monuments. The Mallikarjuna temple, at the southern periphery of the Mahakuta compound, appears to be a slightly later copy of the Mahakuteshvara, almost identical to it in scale and design, but with minor variations in its sculptural adornment. Particular historical circumstances must have dictated the commissioning of these two, almost perfectly matching religious monuments, but they remain unknown. All the other Early Chalukya temples at Mahakuta are modest projects, consisting merely of small towered sanctuaries fronted by entrance porches. Two of these, the Sangameshvara and Virupaksheshvara, are built in the Nagara idiom, with characteristic *shikhara* styled towers. Several others have pyramidal towers with diminishing tiers of *kapota* eaves, in the local Deccan manner. (The names of the temples given here accord with the signs provided by the Mahakuta Trust.)

Another temple related to the Mahakuta group is that at Naganathakolla, 5 kilometres distant, which is also included here. However, several of the smaller Early Chalukya temples at Mahakuta, which are ruined or partly encroached upon, are not described, nor are the tiny Bananti shrine perched on the hillside above Mahakuta, or the dilapidated apsidal-ended temple at nearby Chikka Mahakuta. As for the gateway standing immediately outside the south-east corner of the Mahakuta compound, with unusual skeletal guardian figures, this is a later construction incorporating Early Chalukya architectural elements.

FACING PAGE
View of the tank, with the Sangameshvara and Mahakuteshvara temples in the background.

BELOW
Inscribed pillar from Mahakuta. (Courtesy ASI)

MAHAKUTESHVARA TEMPLE

Somewhat altered and repeatedly coated with whitewash, the original scheme of this temple is still apparent: a sanctuary surrounded by a passageway on three sides, opens into a triple-aisled, square *mandapa*, entered through a small porch with four columns, now contained within a modern addition. A small Nandi pavilion stands a short distance away to the east.

The passageway and *mandapa* walls are elevated on a basement with a partly curved moulding overhung by a *kapota* with *kudus*, and a course partly carved with *gana* panels set between open-mouthed *makaras* (south). Above is a row of relief panels separated by foliate bands. These show crowded battle scenes, with warriors brandishing bows and arrows, riding in chariots or upon horses and elephants, and royal entertainments with courtly couples with female attendants enjoying music and dance performances. Greatly worn and overpainted, it is not possible to identify these scenes. These royal topics are occasionally interrupted by legendary scenes, such as Ravana beneath Kailasa, and Bhagirathi performing austerities (south face).

Double pairs of pilasters define wall projections in two planes on three sides of the passageway walls, on the north and south faces of the *mandapa* walls, and on the east *mandapa* walls either side of the entrance porch. The projections each contain two-armed Shiva figures (identified, not always accurately, by modern labels), mostly showing the god holding a trident, axe, snake and/or spear. Sculpture projections on the north and south faces of the passageway and *mandapa* are flanked by perforated stone windows with geometric designs, one with a central swastika (south *mandapa* walls). The windows are framed by secondary pilasters supporting miniature eaves, occasionally on friezes of *hamsas*, headed by pediments with *kutas* and *shalas*, as well as different combinations of *gavakshas*. The walls are terminated by *kapota* eaves, without *kudus*, and a parapet with corner *kutas* and with *shalas* positioned over the wall projections below, extend onto the roof of the porch.

The square tower over the sanctuary has pilastered walls with shallow triple projections on each side, the central projections being doubled, topped with a *kuta-shala-kuta* parapet. The octagon-to-dome roof above is framed by model corner elements with *kuta* roofs, with intermediate elements of the same design. A *kalasha* finial is preserved above.

The *mandapa* interior has massive, undecorated free-standing columns and half-columns engaged into the walls. Plain, curved brackets carry transverse beams (running north-south) and horizontal roof slabs throughout. Significantly, this is the only occurrence of transverse beam and flat roofs in all of Early Chalukya architecture. (This scheme is familiar in Pallava structural projects, but whether it reflects the involvement of architects from the Tamil zone remains unknown.) Though partly obliterated, the sanctuary doorway is framed by raised bands with miniature figures, with river goddesses and companions beneath at either side. Worn *gavaksha* motifs can be made out on the entablature above. The small *linga* cloaked with a brass face-mask within is probably not earlier than the 18th century.

The Nandi pavilion has columns with raised bands and part-circles; square cushion type brackets are overhung by a smooth curved eave and short parapet (restored). The seated Nandi within may be a later replacement.

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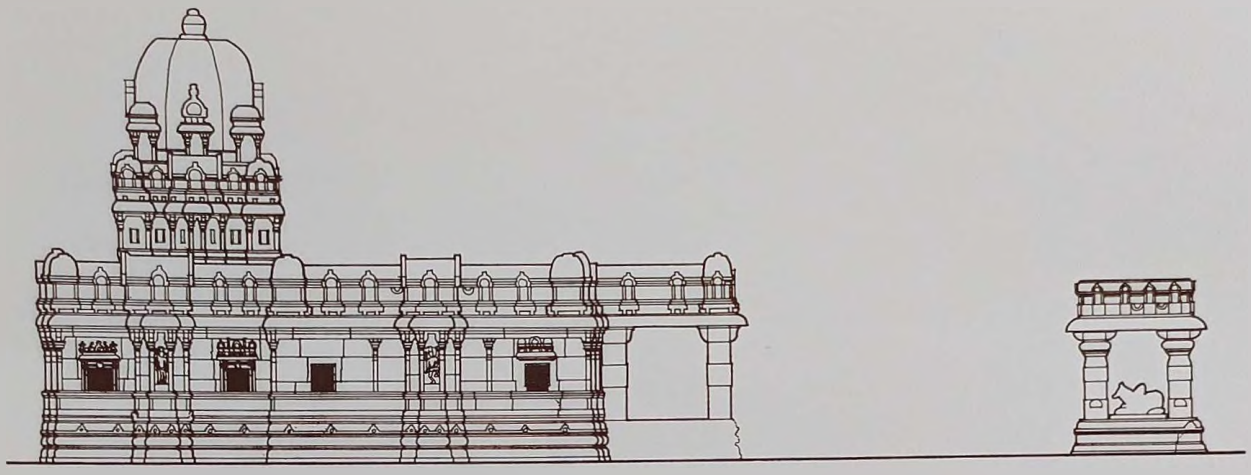
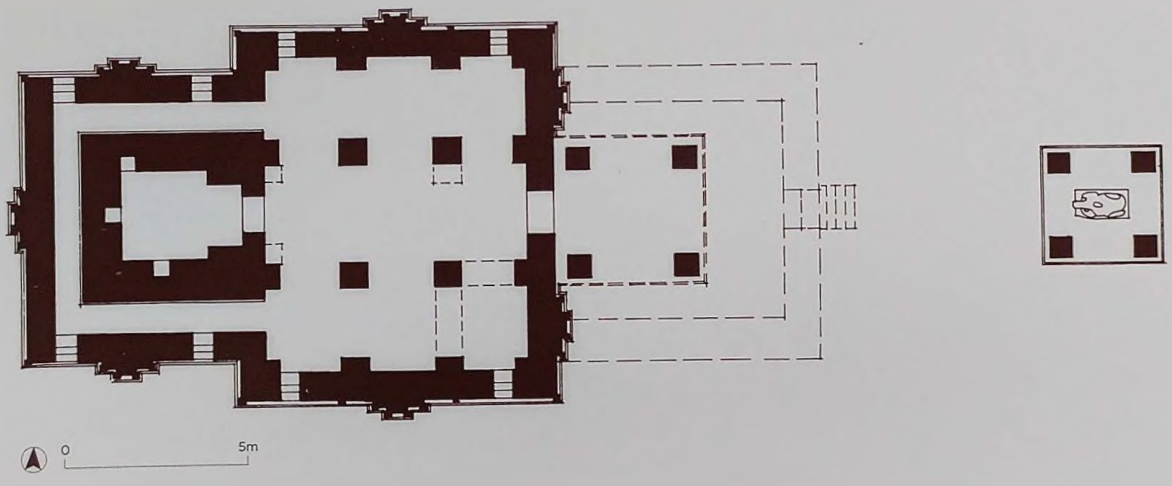
Plan and elevation of the Mahakuteshvara temple.

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ABOVE
Mahakuteshvara temple from the south-west.

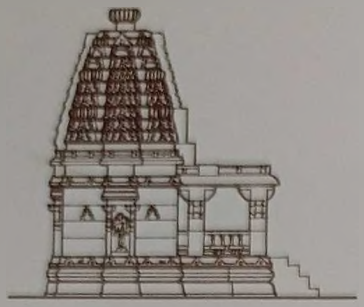
FACING PAGE
Two-armed Shiva; wall panel on the temple.

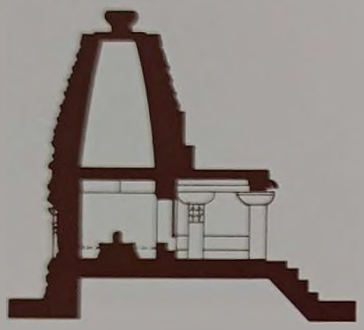
Basement friezes on the Mahakuteshvara temple

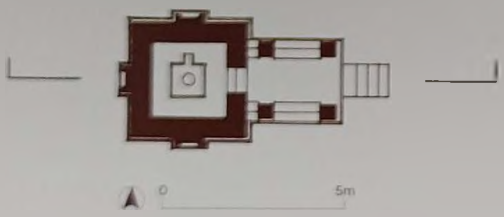
ABOVE
Female dancer and musicians.

ABOVE RIGHT
Ravana disturbing Shiva and Parvati.

BELOW
Unidentified battle scene.







SANGAMESHVARA TEMPLE

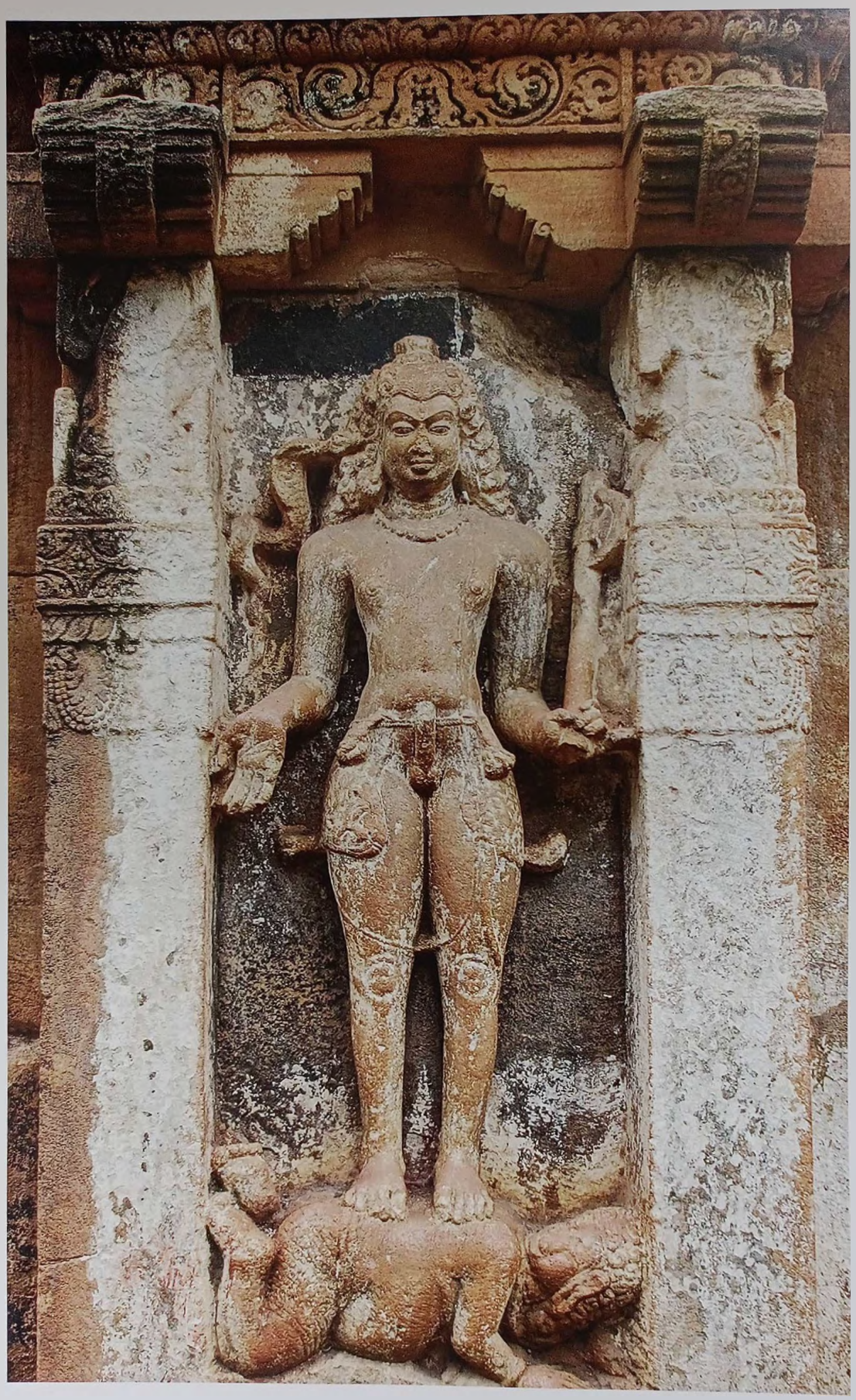
This east-facing temple stands immediately south of the Mahakuteshvara, next to the northern bank of the tank. Its outer walls are raised on a basement with a part-octagonal moulding. Sculpture niches in the middle of three sides of the sanctuary are created by pairs of secondary pilasters with rounded brackets (not contiguous with the walls) carrying miniature eaves on a recessed course decorated with lotus ornament. The niches accommodate Lakulisha with erect phallus and curly hair, holding an axe and snake (south) and elegantly posed Ardhanarishvara (west), both two-armed, and four-armed Harihara (north). Pediment-like *gavaksha* motifs, unconnected with any niches, are positioned on the walls at either side.

The Nagara styled *shikhara* tower that rises above has triple facets on each face, composed of diminishing tiers of *kapotas* decorated with *gavakshas*, interrupted by regularly spaced *amalakas* on the outer facets. The tower is crowned with an *amalaka* finial. The frontal (east) projection is blocked out, but devoid of carvings.

The four porch columns, raised on an extension of the basement mouldings, have part-octagonal sections between part-circles filled with lotuses. They are overhung by smoothly curved eaves. Balcony slabs inserted between the north and south pairs of columns have miniature pilasters framing couples on a frieze of paired *yalis*.

ABOVE
Plan, section and elevation of the Sangameshvara temple

FACING PAGE
The temple from the west.



Wall panels on the Sangameshvara temple

LEFT
Two-armed Shiva as Lakulisha.

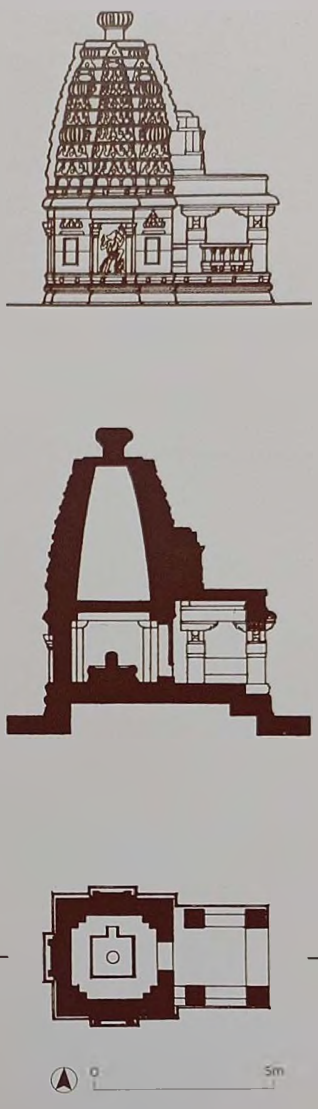
FACING PAGE
Shiva as Ardhanarishvara.

VIRUPAKSHESHVARA TEMPLE

This temple, on the west side of the Mahakuta compound, faces east towards the tank, a short distance south-west of the Sangameshvara, which it resembles in all essential respects, including its *shikhara* type tower. The basement of the Virupaksheshvara, however, has a central faceted curved moulding, and is topped by a frieze of *yalis* and elephants. Sculptures in the wall niches portray Varaha (south) (see back jacket), Vishnu (west) and Narasimha disembowelling his victim (north), even though a *linga* is installed in the sanctuary (possibly a replacement). Garlands framed by flying *ganas* are carved on the blocks over the niches. Pediment-like *gavaksha* motifs, unconnected with any niches, are seen on the walls at either side. The block placed against the frontal projection on the tower has a pilastered niche framing a damaged icon of Nataraja.

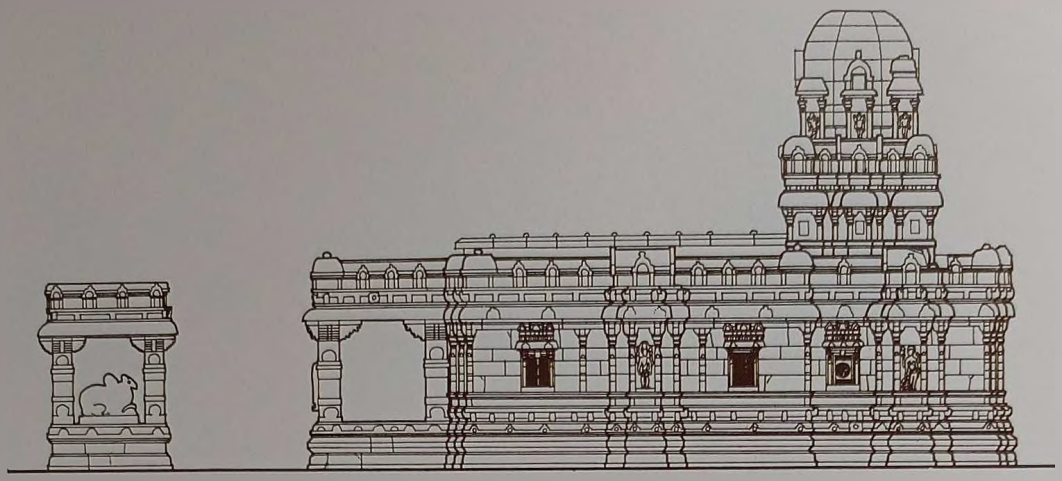
The porch columns, with part-circles at the tops of the shafts, are embellished with ornate lotus ornament. Miniature couples, female attendants and *ganas* are carved onto the balcony slabs in between.

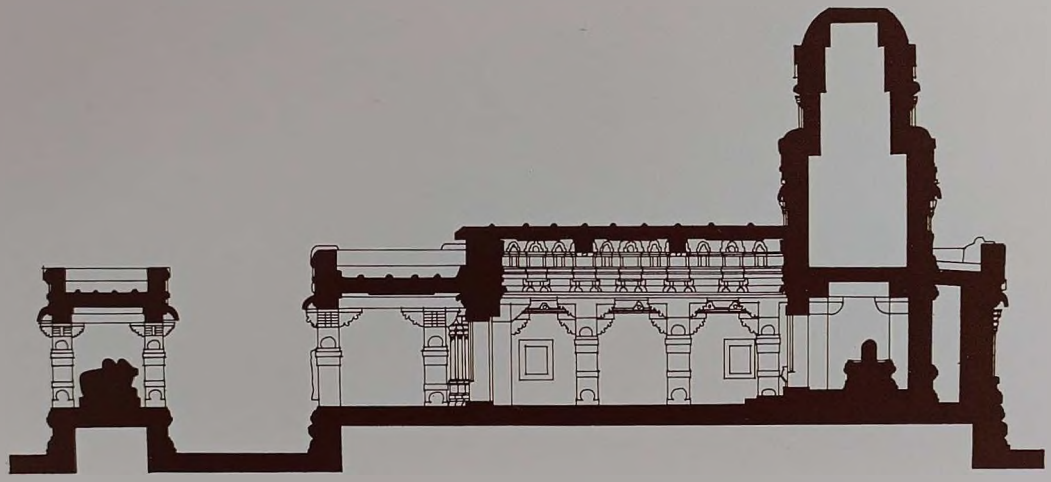
The *shikhara* tower that rises above consists of five diminishing tiers of *kapotas* with *kudus*, separated by recessed pilastered courses, and capped by an *amalaka* finial. The sanctuary doorway is fronted by a flat-roofed, four-columned porch.

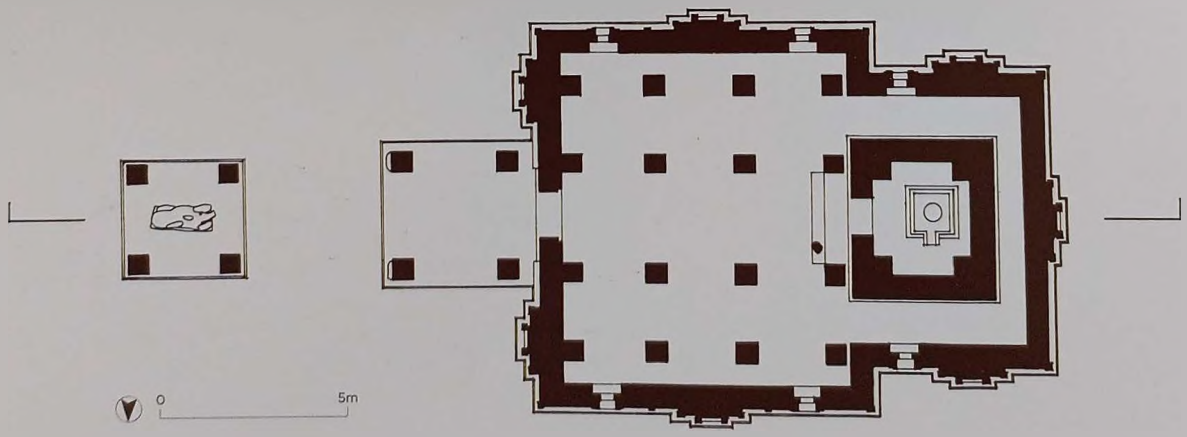


RIGHT
Plan, section and elevation of the Virupaksheshvara temple.

FACING PAGE
The temple from the north.



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MALLIKARJUNA TEMPLE

Except for its interior arrangement, which employs the more usual, axially disposed, triple-aisled *mandapa*, and single rather than double windows in the north and south passageway walls, the Mallikarjuna accurately imitates the layout of the Mahakuteshvara. There are, however, several differences in the treatment of the outer walls. The basement of the Mallikarjuna employs a part-octagonal rather than a curved course, but here also there are panels with crowded battle scenes and courtly entertainments too eroded to permit identification. These subjects only occur on the north and south walls; panels with *ganas* are seen on the west. Again, double pairs of wall pilasters frame icons of Shiva, but here the figures are all of the more usual four-armed type holding snake, trident and/or axe. They contrast with icons of Ardhanarishvara and Vishnu (north passageway and *mandapa* walls). Two-armed guardians bearing a trident or spear are seen on the east *mandapa* walls. Unlike the pediments over the stone windows of the Mahakuteshvara, the pediments over the Mallikarujuna windows employ *kutas* and *shalas* only. The parapet and tower, however, exactly replicate those of the Mahakuteshvara, though without any finial.

Mandapa columns in the Mallikarjuna have triple raised bands with double part-circles. Brackets with rolled ends with *yalis* carry beams treated as *kapotas*, surmounted by panels filled with *ganas* headed by *kutas* and *shalas*. Squatting figures serving as brackets carry transverse beams over the central aisle, which is roofed with raised horizontal slabs. Ceiling panels (worn) here depict (from east to west): a lotus surrounded by four flying celestial couples and smaller corner blossoms; Brahma in the company of four *lokapalas*, including Indra on the elephant and Agni on the ram; and Shiva and Parvati on flying Nandi, framed by dancing *ganas*. Sloping slabs roof the side aisles to the north and south. (All the roof slabs have their outer joints protected externally by log-like stone strips.) The sanctuary doorway is framed by decorated bands and a pair of pilasters carrying a *kapota* on a frieze of *hamsas*. Above rises a pilastered entablature with miniature figures (unclear), headed by *kutas* and *shalas*. Garuda appears on the lintel, and river goddesses and attendants beneath at either side. A *linga* set into a square *pitha* is preserved within.

The porch columns repeat those of the *mandapa* interior, except that the frontal columns have carvings of guardian figures: one with moustache and curly hair, grasping a staff with two hands; the other is unfinished. The free-standing pavilion in front (now linked to the temple by a modern concrete structure) accommodates a majestic Nandi carved out of golden coloured sandstone. Horizontal roof slabs are topped by a low parapet with a *kapota* (obscured).

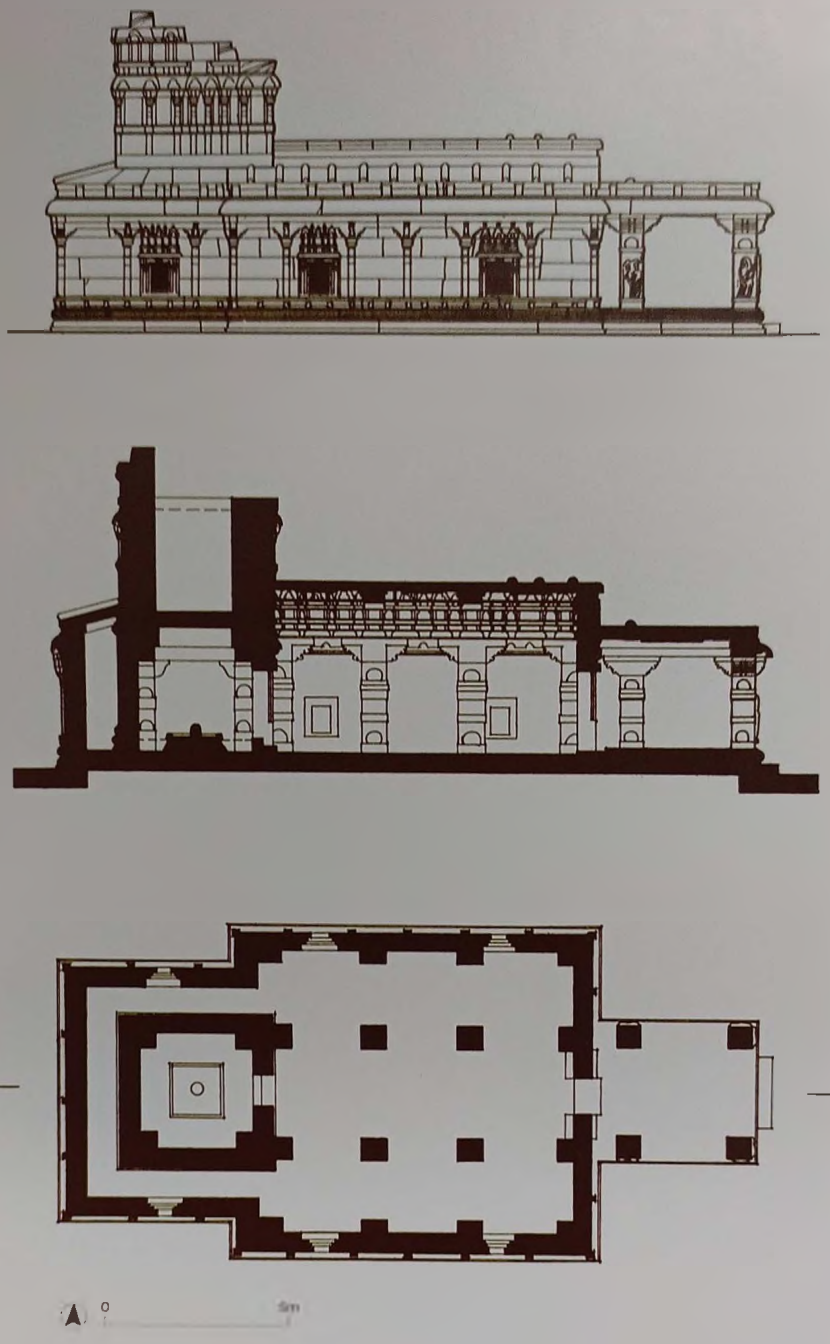
FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Mallikarjuna temple.

BELOW
Sculpted Nandi in the pavilion in front of the temple.

FOLLOWING PAGES
The temple from the north-east.

LEFT
Four-armed Shiva; wall panel on the Mallikarjuna temple.

FACING PAGE
Guardian holding a staff; carving on a porch column in the temple.



NAGANATHA TEMPLE

The temple at Naganathakolla is laid out as a rectangle containing a square *linga* sanctuary with a passageway and a triple-aisled *mandapa* entered through a porch. The outer walls of the temple are raised on a basement with a rounded faceted central moulding topped by a frieze of animals. The walls are divided into regular bays by pilasters with fluted brackets embellished with diminutive rearing *yalis*, elephants, peacocks, some with riders, and *ganas* (but not at the corners). Perforated windows with criss-cross and swastika designs are set into the north and south passageway walls (one each) and *mandapa* walls (two each). The windows are framed by secondary pilasters carrying *kapotas*, with Garuda over the lintels, above which are animal friezes and pediments with finely worked triple *kapota-shala-kapota* pediments, and one with triple *gavakshas* (south *mandapa* walls). The walls are terminated by smoothly curved *kapota* eaves. Only the pilastered lower square storey of the tower above the sanctuary survives. Remaining blocks *in situ* and several fallen on the ground nearby indicate that this would have been crowned with an octagon-to-dome roof, as in the larger Mahakuta monuments.

The *mandapa* columns have raised bands and part-circles. Fluted brackets carry *kapotas*, pilastered courses with diminutive figures, and entablatures with *kutas* and *shalas*. Crouching *ganas* on brackets support transverse beams over the central aisle. The raised, horizontal roof slabs have ceiling compositions (worn) depicting (from east to west): Vishnu with attendants; seated Brahma surrounded by four *lokapalas*, with flying celestials in the corners; and Shiva and Parvati on flying Nandi, surrounded by *ganas* and sages. The sanctuary doorway has pilasters carrying a *kapota* on a *hamsa* frieze, headed by a *kuta-shala-kuta* entablature, somewhat unfinished. A small *linga* on a square *pitha* is installed within. The surrounding passageway and the outer *mandapa* aisles are roofed with sloping slabs.

The four porch columns resemble those of the *mandapa* just described, though with their outer faces embellished with embracing couples beneath trees. Above the Nandi now placed here is a Nagaraja ceiling composition.

The spectacular Lajja Gauri icon found at Naganathakolla is now displayed in the Badami Archaeological Museum. However, it is not clear if it ever received worship in this temple. No other religious structure is now seen in the vicinity.

LEFT
Lajja Gauri from Naganathakolla, now in the Archaeological Museum, Badami. (Courtesy ASI)

FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Naganatha temple at Naganathakolla.

ABOVE
Naganatha temple at Naganathakolla from the south-east.

FACING PAGE
Window with ornate pediment on the temple.

C72
C69
C68

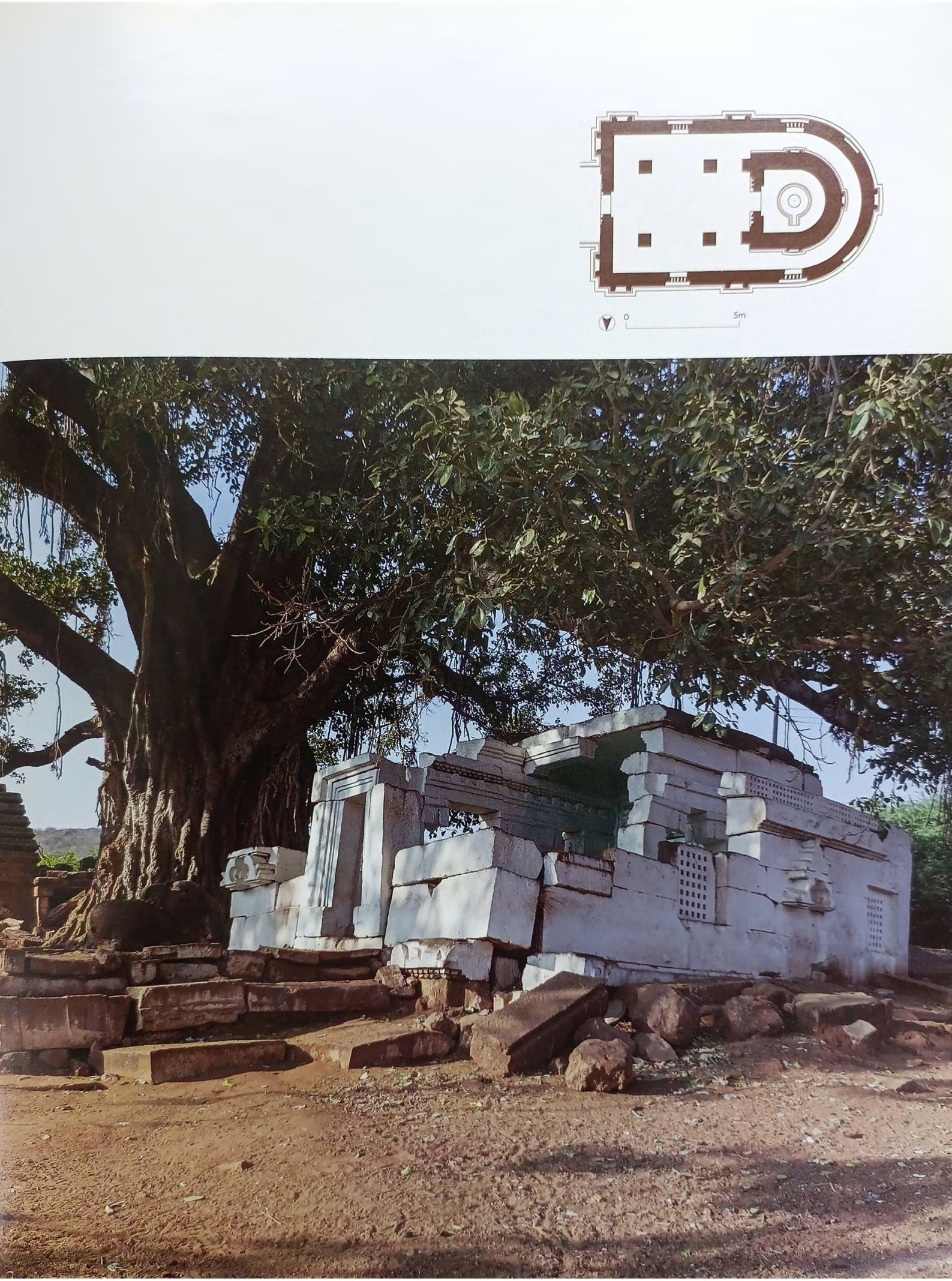
FACING PAGE ABOVE
Plan of apsidal-ended temple at Chikka Mahakuta.

BELOW
Dilapidated temple and nearby tank.

CHIKKA MAHAKUTA

In between Mahakuta and Naganathakolla is another natural spring feeding a tank, overlooked by a small whitewashed temple. Until recently, dilapidated and shaded by a great banyan tree, this building had an unusual, apsidal-ended layout (recalling the much larger, and possibly later Durga temple at Aihole). Here, a *linga* sanctuary opening into a small *mandapa* with four columns is surrounded by a narrow passageway.

The curving outer walls of the passageway and the north and south *mandapa* walls have crudely fashioned perforated stone windows, possibly replacements. Niches in between the windows, also at either side of the *mandapa* doorway on the east, are now missing their framing colonettes and carved panels, though their *gavaksha* pediments remain. Most of the roof slabs are missing; so, too, the tower over the sanctuary.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AIHOLE

The town of Aihole is located near the right bank of the Malprabha river, about 20 kilometres north-east of Badami, at the foot of the flat-topped Meguti hill. In addition to being an important population centre in Early Chalukya times, Aihole was also home of a famous mercantile guild known as the 'Ayyavole 500', active across much of Southern India between the 8th and 13th centuries. That Aihole had a substantial population during this period is confirmed by the large number of temples, both Hindu and Jain, dating from successive Early Chalukya, Rashtrakuta and Late Chalukya occupations. Some of these stand in the middle of the town, where until recently they were encroached upon by houses, surrounded by a ring of protective ramparts; others stand in the fields beyond the ramparts.

Aihole's Early Chalukya temples span the transition from rock-cut to structural building techniques. The descriptions begin with the Ravanaphadi cave-temple to the north-east of the town, and the Jain cave-temple excavated into the western flank of Meguti hill. Then comes the double-storeyed, partly rock-cut Buddhist monument on the northern flank of the hill. The account of Aihole's structural monuments begins with the Jain temple that dominates the town from its location on the summit of Meguti hill. This may be considered the earliest surviving specimen of the Dravida style in all of Southern India. Furthermore, it is the only monument in Aihole with a foundation inscription; this is dated 634 during the reign of Polakeshi II. The next group of temples to be described begins with the Durga temple, with its unique apsidal-ended plan and Nagara styled *shikhara* tower, standing in the middle of the town. This is followed by other examples with similar shikara towers; notably, the Suryanarayana temple and Chakragudi, both located near to the Durga, and the Tarappa temple and Hucchappayyagudi and the Hucchimalligudi, all situated outside the town's ramparts. Then come the Galaganatha and Mallikarjuna, both with contrasting, Deccan styled pyramidal towers. The following temples altogether lack towers, but employ the part-open layouts and sloping roof slabs protected by log-like stone strips characteristic of the Malprabha architectural idiom. They comprise the Gaudargudi, the Lad Khan temple, two temples of the Kunti group and the Hucchappayyamatha and Chikkigudi. The most monumental expression of this idiom is the Lad Khan, with its grandly scaled *mandapa* roofed with double tiers of sloping slabs. Such classifications, however, hardly do justice to the complex relationships between the different styles that intermingled in Aihole's architecture.

Other than the Jain temple on Meguti hill already noticed and the Hucchimalligudi and Durga, the last two associated, respectively, with engraved records mentioning Vijayaditya and Vikramaditya [II], Aihole's Early Chalukya temples lack verifiable historical data. The Ravanaphadi and the Jain and Buddhist cave-temples on Meguti hill may be considered contemporary with Badami's rock-cut monuments in the second half of the 6th century. But other than the Meguti temple, Aihole's structural temples are all to be assigned to the late 7th and first half of the 8th centuries. In addition to their chronological uncertainty, many of the temples are confusingly named after the townsfolk who inhabited them up until recent times, rather than their original dedications. The Durga temple suffers from a particular misunderstanding, since it takes its name not from the goddess Durga, but from *durg*, or fort.

FACING PAGE
Eroded, fluted column in front of the Ravanaphadi cave-temple.

RAVANAPHADI

Locally known as Ravana's Rock (*phadi*), this cave-temple is the focus of a small complex of free-standing features, including a worn fluted column that stands in front, its *amalaka* capital lying on the ground nearby, an eroded Nandi, and three small shrines (restored), each with a cubical chamber and a four-columned porch, near to its entrance. The two shrines on either side of the cave-temple's entrance have flat roofs; and that facing away from the entrance is topped with a diminutive *kuta* roof.

The Ravanaphadi is entered through a triple-bayed opening with a pair of slender monolithic columns between engaged columns, each with a short octagonal section framed by cut-out petal motifs at the top of the shafts. Worn guardians can be made out beside the engaged columns. These figures hold spears and wear short cloaks and pointed caps, suggesting that they may be foreign (probably Sasanian) mercenaries. Rock faces at either side have pot-bellied *nidhis* seated in pilastered niches raised on tripartite basements and capped with *kuta* roofs (also worn).

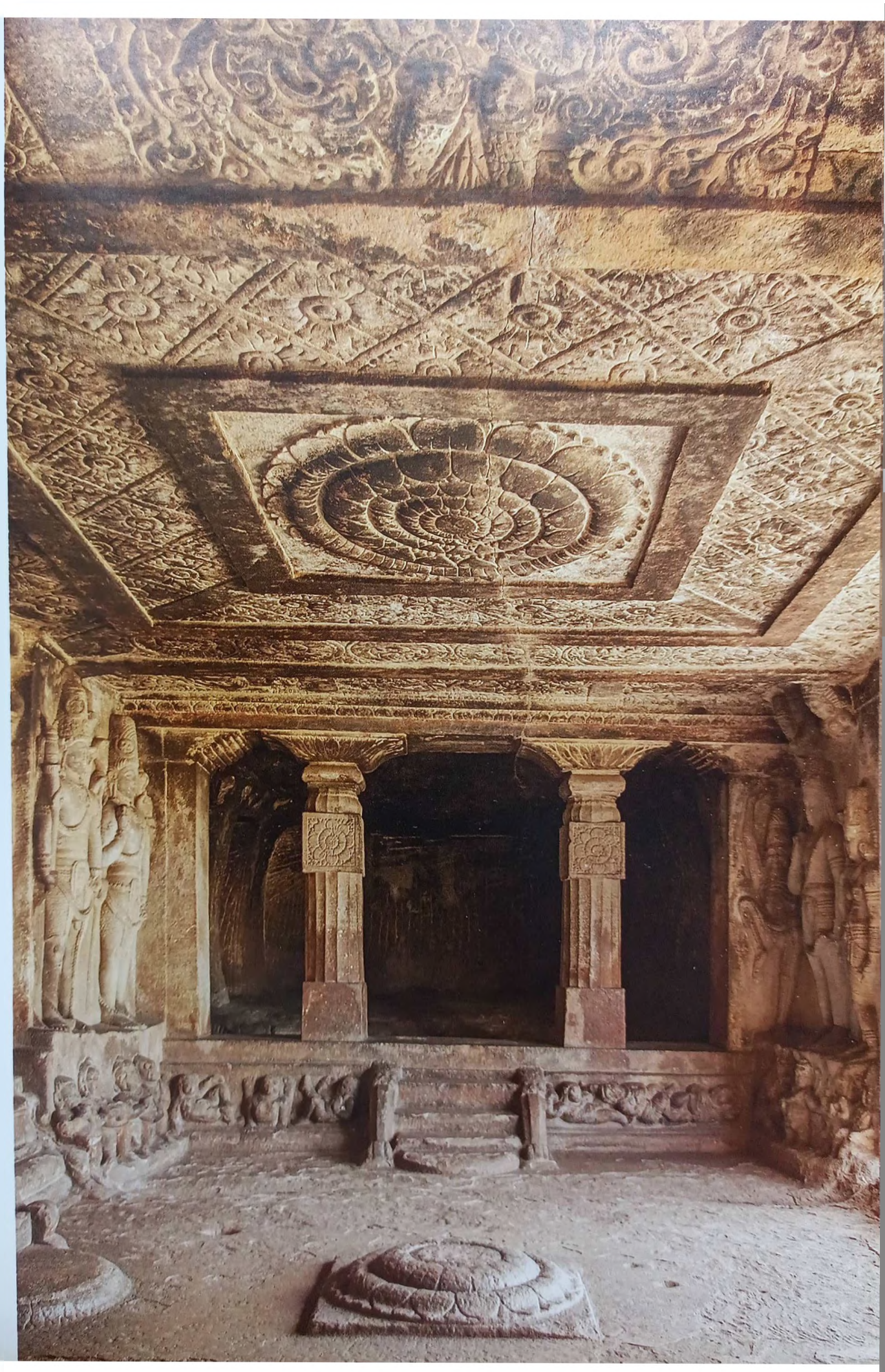
Balustraded steps give access to a square *mandapa* with triple-bayed openings leading to chambers on three sides, each accessed by further steps. The openings are raised on low basement mouldings, with a frieze of *gana* musicians on the right. The free-standing (monolithic) columns framing the openings leading to the two side chambers have slender, part-sixteen-faceted shafts, with square cushion capitals; the columns framing the entrance to the *linga* chamber, on axis with the entrance to the cave-temple, are square throughout. Figures carved onto the walls beside the triple-bayed openings portray (in a clockwise sequence, beginning from the left of the outer entrance to the *mandapa*): Ardhanarishvara holding a tall trident; two Shiva guardians, each holding a staff with a blade or *chamara*-plume, and a trident; four-armed Harihara; and four-armed Shiva with the torsos of three river goddesses emerging over the god's head, in the company of Parvati and skeletal Bhagirathi. The figures are remarkable for their slender proportions, smoothly rounded limbs, and tall conical headdresses with fluted halos behind. The same characteristics are present in the figures on the rear and side walls of the left-hand chamber which depicts a ten-armed Nataraja, his two hands holding up a sinuous serpent, in the company of Parvati and the *saptamatrikas*, and diminutive Ganesha and Subrahmanya. The figures all wear fluted costumes, and have their limbs disposed at angles to suggest vigorous movement. Traces of colour suggest that they were all once painted.

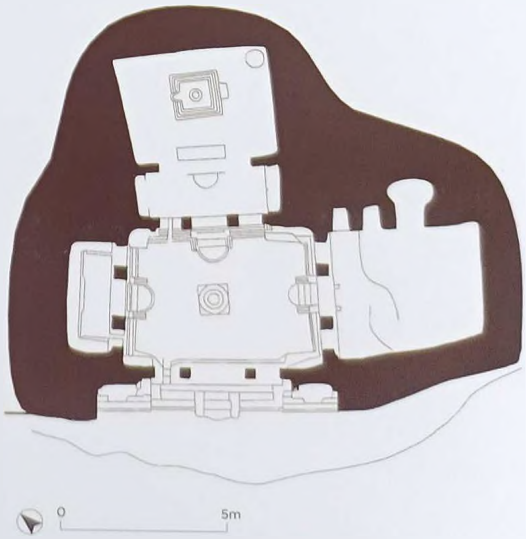
The interior *mandapa* ceiling is altogether covered with a relief composition with a central lotus surrounded by bands of medallions and scrollwork incorporating miniature couples, some reduced to mere torsos. A lotus is carved in the middle of the floor beneath. The opposite side of the cave-temple's entrance gives access to a small vestibule, flanked by wall panels of Varaha rescuing Bhudevi (left) and Mahishasuramardini (right), both shown with deeply cut, robust limbs. Ceiling medallions in front show Indra on the elephant (left) and Vishnu on Garuda (right), flying through the clouds with companions. A monolithic pedestal and *linga* are seen within the sanctuary beyond, but here too are found fallen doorway jambs carved as separate blocks. The right-hand chamber of the cave-temple was abandoned and unfinished.

FACING PAGE
Interior of the Ravanaphadi.

BELOW
Human torsos in foliation; ceiling details in the Ravanaphadi.

PAGES 112-113
Entrance to the *linga* sanctuary.





ABOVE
Dancing Shiva, together with Parvati and Ganesha; wall panel in the side chamber of the Ravanaphadi.

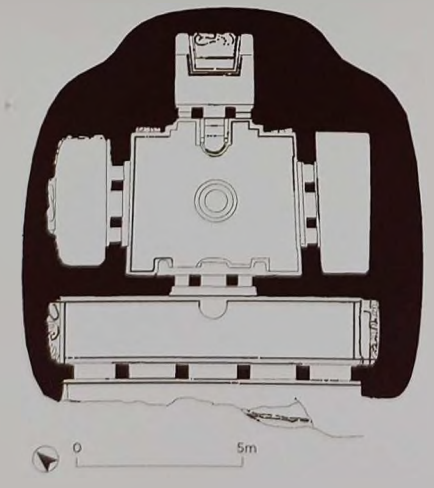
RIGHT
Plan of the Ravanaphadi.

FACING PAGE
Durga spearing the buffalo; wall panel in the *linga* sanctuary.

JAIN CAVE-TEMPLE

The facade of this partly unfinished rock-cut monument originally presented four plain, free-standing columns defining five openings. But these columns were concealed by sandstone slabs framing a simple doorway, introduced in Early Chalukya times to secure the rocky overhang above, which must have developed cracks soon after work had begun. What was intended as the outer verandah of the cave-temple has its end walls carved with figures of Parshvanatha, his head sheltered by serpent hoods and a parasol, accompanied by a seated male devotee and a standing female attendant with parasol (left), and Bahubali flanked by his sisters Brahmi and Sundari (right). The verandah ceiling is almost entirely covered with an elaborate relief composition. This consists of a line of five panels filled with swastika motifs, criss-cross petals and lotus medallions, separated by bands with open-mouthed *makaras*.

A triple-bayed opening in the rear verandah wall gives access to a square *mandapa*, with similar triple-bayed openings on three sides, each leading to a small chamber. The openings are defined by slender (monolithic) columns with partly fluted shafts, square cushion capitals and angled brackets. The triple-bayed opening at the rear of the *mandapa*, on axis with the cave-temple's entrance, is framed by recessed bands, with a *kapota* above showing triple *kudus*. Guardian figures, each holding a lotus, together with diminutive attendants, are carved onto the side walls. Balustraded steps give access to the chamber, on the rear wall of which is a meditating Jina. The figure is seated on a bolstered throne with *yalis*, flanked by *chamara*-bearing attendants. His head is framed by an oval halo, with cut-out triple parasols above. The rear wall of the left-hand chamber has a similar seated Jina, though here lions can be made out at the base of the throne. A crowd of devotees (unfinished) at either side, extending onto the side walls, include a large seated couple (left), and a couple riding on an elephant (right). The right-hand chamber was left incomplete. As in the verandah, the *mandapa* ceiling is embellished with relief designs. These show central and corner lotuses set in panels with fanciful foliation incorporating fish, open-mouthed *makaras* and even two pairs of human torsos at the midpoints.

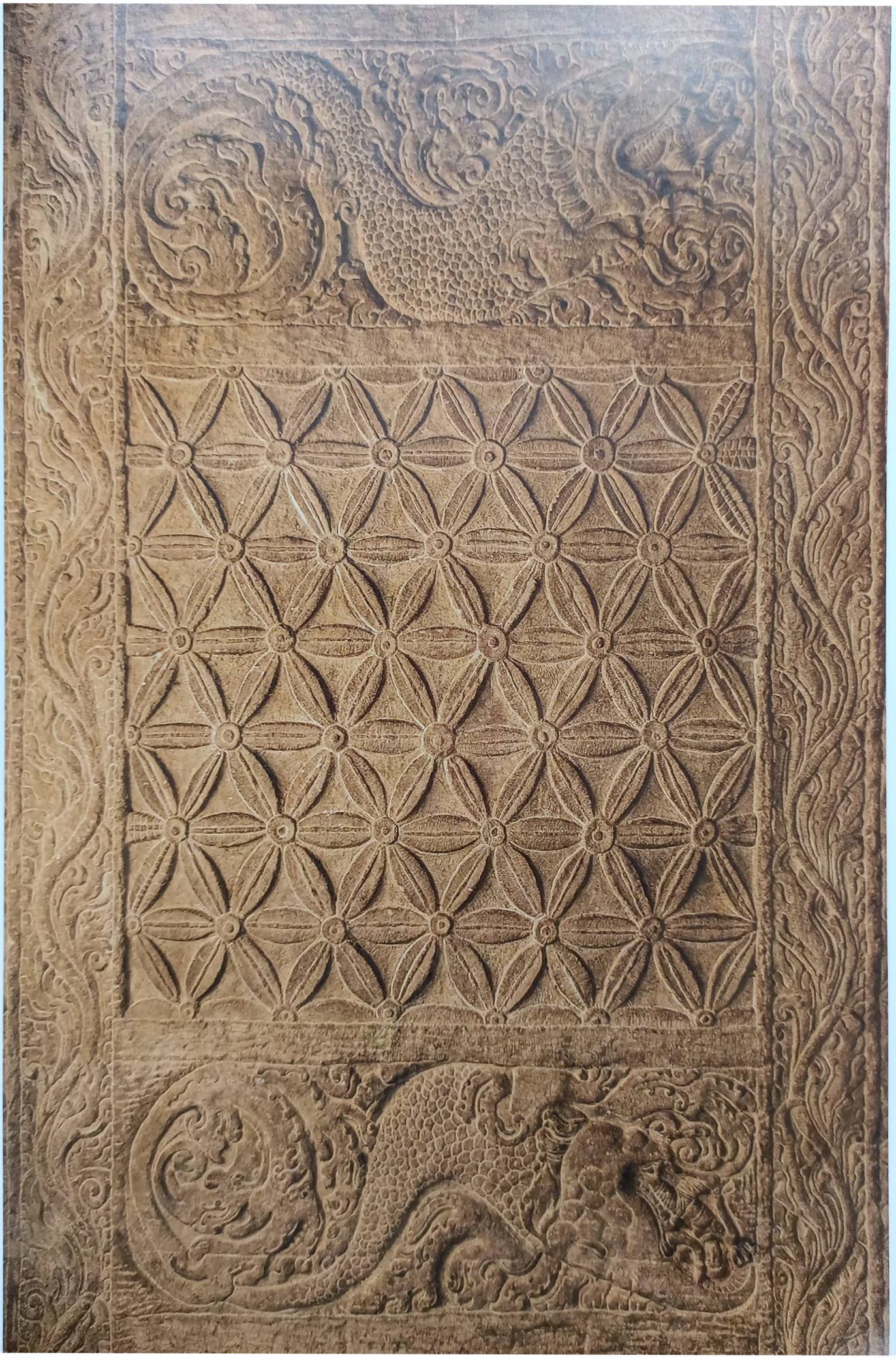


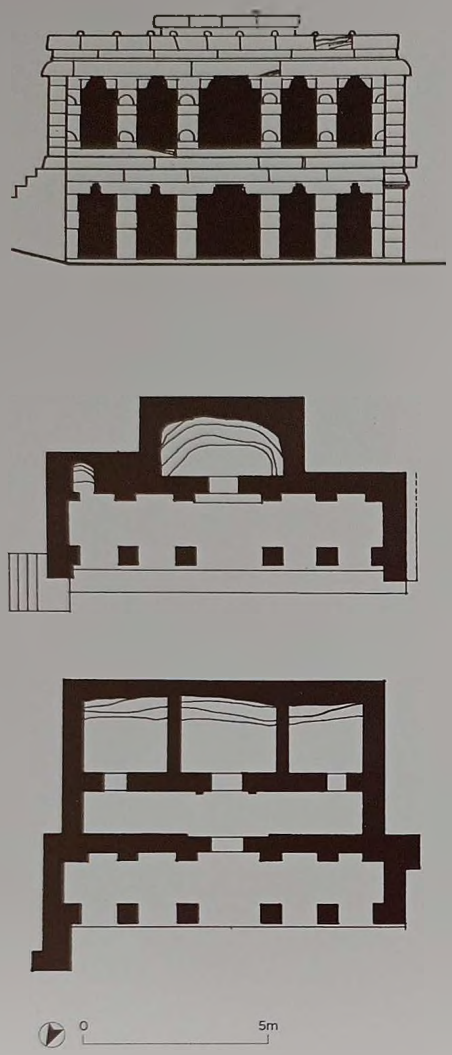
ABOVE
Interior of the Jain cave-temple.

FACING PAGE
Plan of the cave-temple.

ABOVE
Bahubali with Brahmi and Sundari; wall panel inside the Jain cave-temple.

FACING PAGE
Petalled pattern and *makaras* on the ceiling.





DOUBLE-STOREYED BUDDHIST TEMPLE

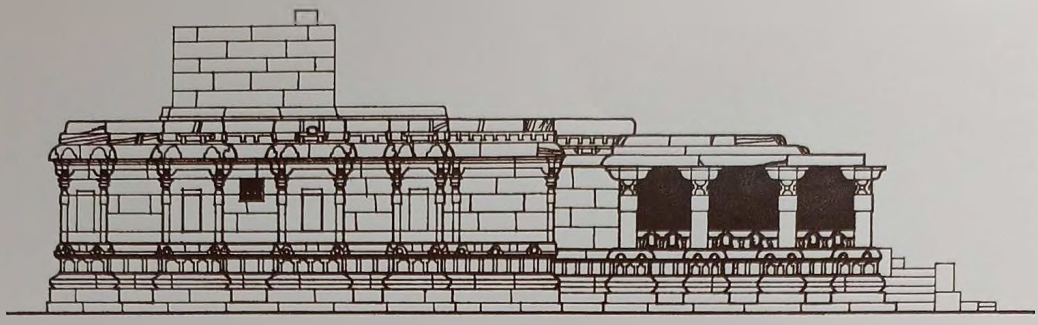
This partly rock-cut monument is located beside the steps climbing to the Jain temple on top of Meguti hill. The temple presents two superimposed, colonnaded structural verandahs, the lower columns plain, the upper columns with bands and part-circles. Curved brackets are overhung by brackets carrying undercut, curving eaves at each level. At the lower level the columns define a verandah with a doorway leading to a long vestibule with a trio of sanctuaries, partly excavated into the rock. The verandah at the upper level has a doorway leading to a single sanctuary.

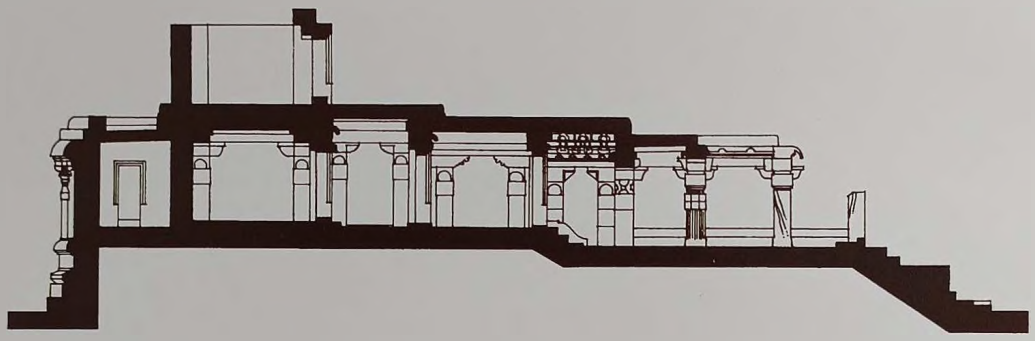
The doorway to the lower vestibule has a pair of fluted pilasters carrying an entablature with blocked-out *kutas* and *shalas*, set within jambs with faceted shafts, foliate and petalled ornament, and tiny panels with figures and animals. These have been interpreted as illustrations of the Buddhist Jataka stories. The figures beneath have been obliterated. The central sanctuary doorway within is of the same type, but without the entablature. Transverse beams in both verandahs have their sides carved with *makaras* spewing *ganas* holding garlands. The ceiling over the central bay at the lower level has a lotus medallion; the corresponding bay at the upper level is carved with a Buddha figure with a fluted halo, seated beneath a parasol. A headless mediating Buddha, now placed outside the temple, may have been removed from one of the lower sanctuaries.

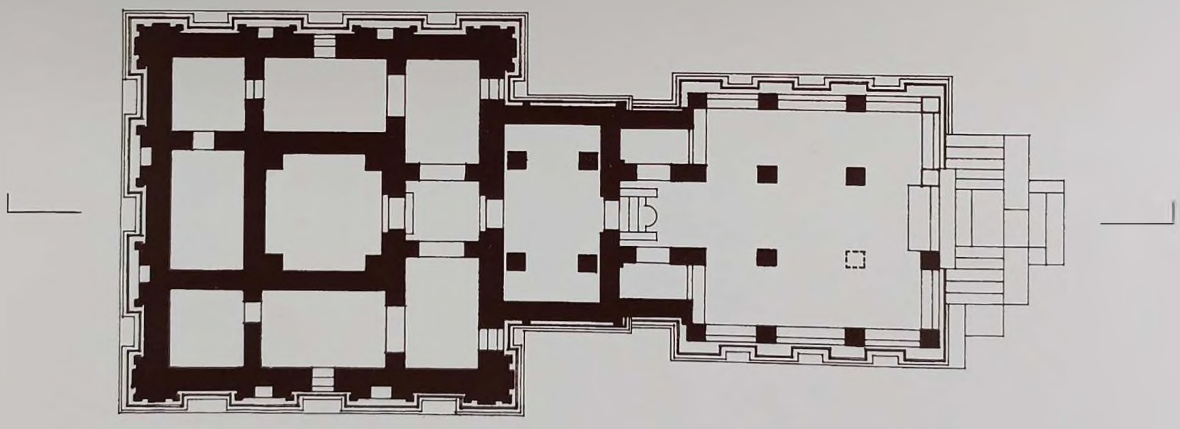
ABOVE
Upper and lower level plans and external elevation of the double-storeyed Buddhist temple.

RIGHT
Headless sculpture of Buddha outside the temple.

FACING PAGE
Steps beside the Double-storeyed Buddhist temple ascending to Meguti hill.



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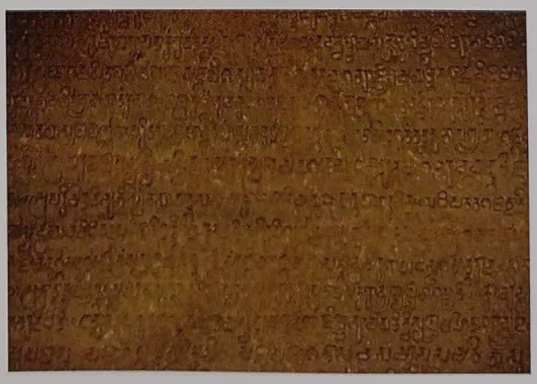
JAIN TEMPLE ON MEGUTI HILL

According to the record engraved in Devanagri script onto a slab set into its east side wall, this north-facing temple was dedicated in 634 to 'Jinendra', without specifying a particular *Tirthankara*. The inscription, authored by Ravikirti, the court poet of Polakeshi II, is composed in elegant Sanskrit verse. In addition to listing the exploits of the king, the text contains the earliest known reference to Kailadasa, the celebrated Gupta period author.

The temple comprises a sanctuary surrounded on four sides by a broad passageway (later divided into chambers by transverse walls with connecting doorways), opening into a vestibule. This is linked with a slightly later, open *mandapa* of sixteen columns with balcony seating on three sides. The passageway walls and *mandapa* columns are raised on a basement with a part-octagonal moulding, a recessed course with diminutive elephant torsos, seated *ganas* and foliate panels separated by pilasters, and a *kapota* with *kudus*. The passageway walls have on each face four pilastered projections alternating with three recesses, repeated in the basement beneath. Deep niches in the central two projections were for pre-carved panels (missing), while uncut portions on the outer two projections were intended for sculptural treatment (never executed). Single perforated stone windows are inserted into the central recesses on the east and west passageway walls and on the shorter northern walls. Wall pilasters with double capitals and curved fluted brackets carry the *kapota* eaves with *kudus*, some filled with human faces. The parapet above concealing the sloping roof slabs has mostly disappeared, but would have consisted of at least two courses judging from the remaining blocks. The roofless square chamber over the sanctuary is a later replacement of a tower that was either dismantled or never completed; only its original basement survives. Protective log-like stone strips are preserved over the joints of the passageway roof slabs.

Doorways to the vestibule, passageway and sanctuary inside the temple are framed by pilasters between recessed bands carrying *kapota* eaves. Only the vestibule doorway, reached by balustrade steps, is topped with a *kuta-shala-kuta* entablature. Columns in the vestibule and *mandapa* have raised bands with part-circles, and brackets with fluted ends; similar columns are built into the corners of the sanctuary. The central four columns of the *mandapa* are distinguished by sixteen-faceted shafts, interrupted by cubical blocks, and rounded brackets with rounded ends. These carry raised and horizontal roof slabs, while slightly sloping slabs roof the surrounding bays on four sides. Slabs for the balcony seating between the peripheral columns have their outer faces divided into pilastered niches, topped by a *kapota*. They are overhung by smoothly curved eaves.

A slab set against the rear walls of the sanctuary is carved with an enthroned Jina, but the head and body are violently scraped away. The figure is seated against a bolster flanked by open-mouthed *makaras* and by *chamara*-bearing attendants. A splendid panel of Ambika, showing the goddess seated on a lion beneath a luxuriant mango tree in the company of female attendants, one of whom holds a child, was originally placed in the temple's vestibule. It is now displayed in Aihole's Archaeological Museum.



LEFT
Inscribed stone slab set into the east wall of the Jain temple on Meguti hill.

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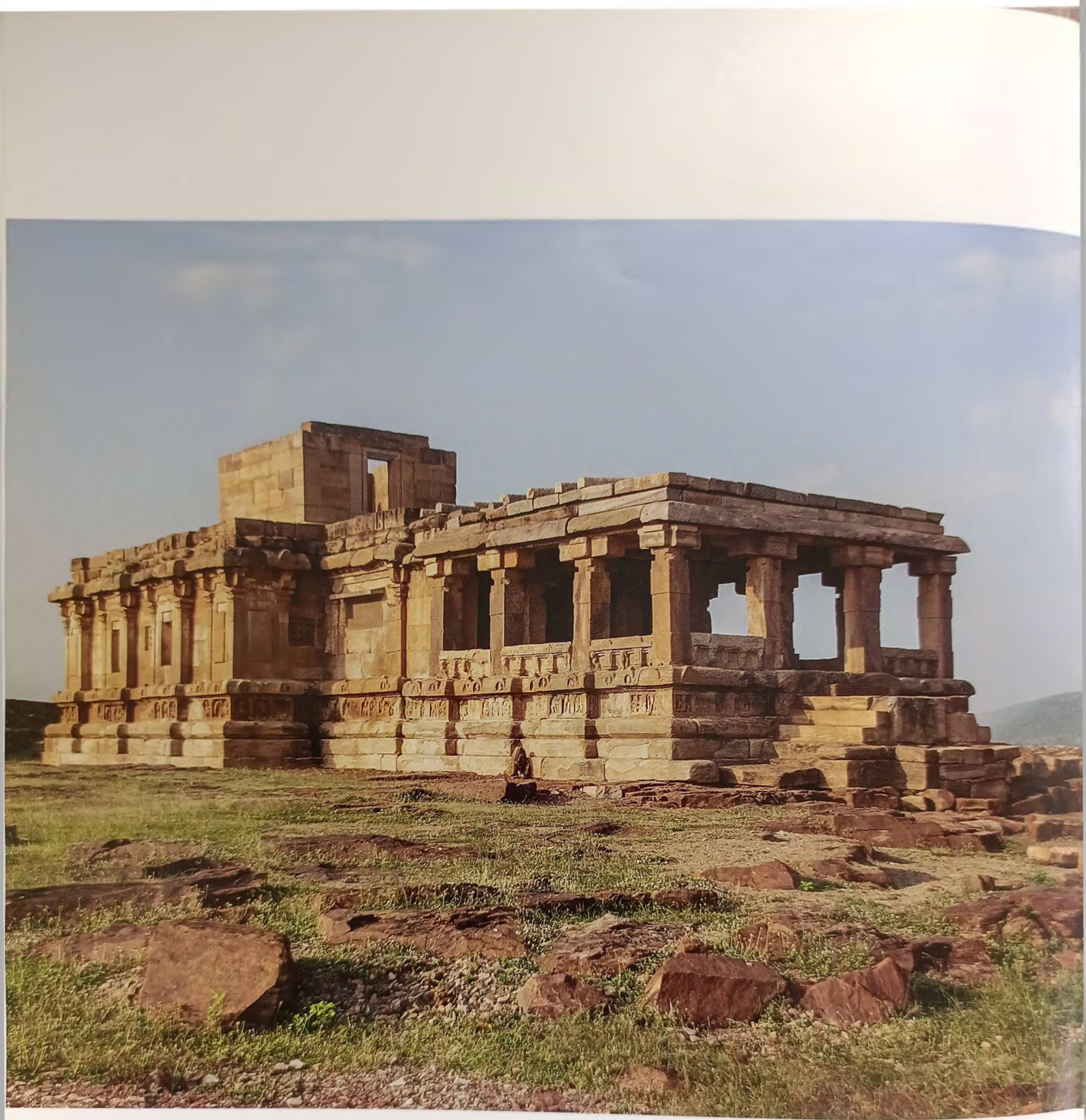
Plan, section and elevation of the Jain temple on Meguti hill.



ABOVE
Jain temple on Meguti hill from the north-east

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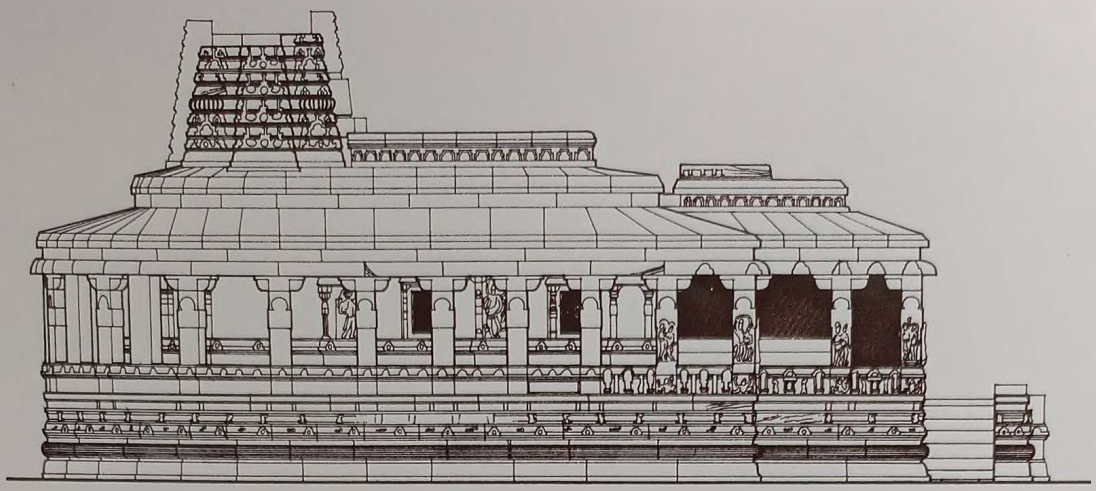
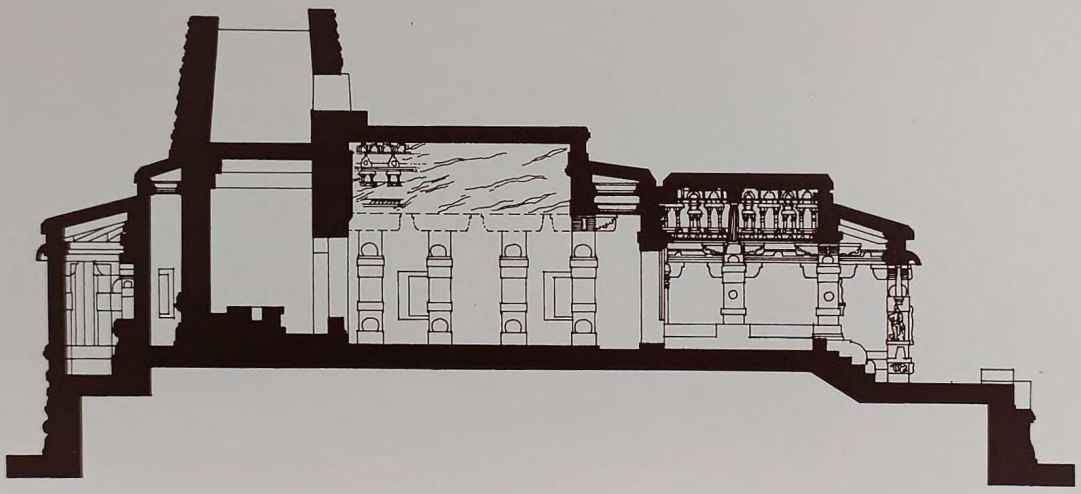
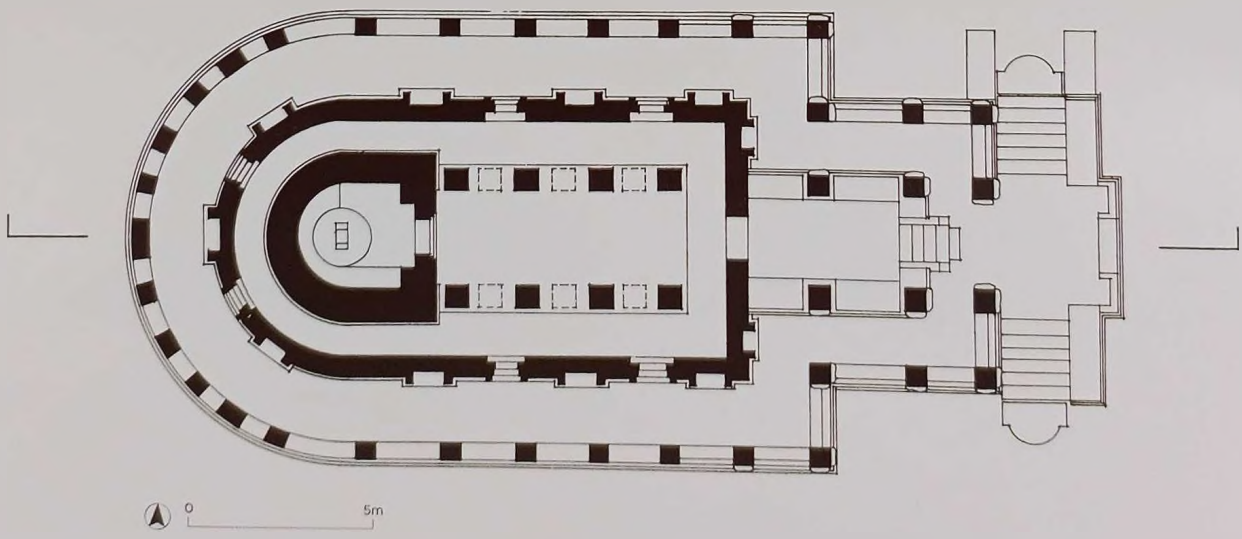
Ambika statue from the temple, now in the Archaeological Museum, Aihole. (Courtesy ASI)



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DURGA TEMPLE

Aihole's largest and most elaborate structural temple is exceptional in layout, since it has an open colonnaded verandah, reached from the east by a double flight of steps, containing what is in effect a complete temple unit. This consists of a semi-circular sanctuary surrounded by a narrow passageway, a triple-aisled *mandapa*, and a porch with balcony seating accessed by its own balustraded steps. An inscription on the adjacent gateway of the temple mentions that during the reign of Vikramaditya [II], a patron named Komarasimha commissioned a temple for Aditya (Surya).

The colonnaded verandah is raised on a high basement with a faceted curved moulding, a *kapota* with *kudus* containing human heads, with animals and birds in between, and a frieze of animals, all of which are extended to the double staircase at the eastern end of the building. Around the verandah there is an additional plain course, which at the eastern end of the building has friezes of figures, now worn and unidentifiable, or leaping *yalis*, flying *ganas* and miniature figures in niches, topped by a shallow *kapota*. The verandah columns have plain bands, except at the eastern end of the temple where their outer faces are carved with embracing couples, including one showing a horse-headed maiden and a male companion, and another with a female carrying a child. The inner faces of the central pair of the columns at the top of the steps have a guardian with one arm resting on a club (east), and another vigorously subduing a female with a horse body (partly broken). Two blocks inserted for additional structural support at the western, curved end of the verandah are carved with a four-armed deity (unknown) with two female consorts in the company of flying diminutive figures, and an unfinished male, now too worn for identification. Curved brackets carry the curving eaves and the bevelled ends of the sloping slabs with which the verandah is roofed all around. The incomplete *shikhara* tower, which sits on the semi-circular sanctuary beneath, lacks any frontal *gavakasha* projection. The capping *amalaka* is found fallen on the ground below.

The internal walls of the *mandapa* and passageway within the colonnaded verandah are raised on a basement with a recessed course, divided into panels filled with lyrical scrollwork or *ganas*. At the porch, the panels contain crowded figural compositions, now eroded. Some of these illustrate *Ramayana* episodes, with Rama and Lakshmana riding in a boat, and Ravana together with his demonic host; others show unidentifiable groups of courtiers and warriors. Throughout, the basement is capped by a *kapota* with ornate *kudus* framing tiny human heads. The walls above have regularly spaced niches alternating with windows, with two additional niches on the east *mandapa* walls, beside the inner porch. Niches and windows are framed by pairs of pilasters of different types, some with small square curved capitals, carrying *kapotas*. They are headed by ornate pediments employing Dravida styled *kutas* and *kudus*, as well as Nagara styled full and half-*gavakshas* arranged in pyramidal formations. Six of the niches accommodate sculpted deities, but these panels are crudely cut to fit, suggesting that they were brought from elsewhere. In clockwise sequence, from the south-east corner of the *mandapa*, they portray: eight-armed Shiva, his uppermost right hand holding up a serpent, his lowest left arm resting on the hump of Nandi; four-armed Narasimha set between fluted pilasters embellished with garlands; four-armed Vishnu with one leg raised as if to perch on Garuda, who appears below with bird-like face and wings, together with Lakshmi; Varaha nuzzling the diminutive figure of Bhudevi, while at the same time firmly suppressing a *naga* demon beneath with one foot; eight-armed Durga vigorously plunging her trident into the neck of Mahisha, the buffalo shown with its head upraised; and rigidly posed eight-armed Harihara. Window designs on the south *mandapa* walls have swastika motifs, criss-cross petals, and radial spokes. The ceilings over the eastern end of the verandah were originally embellished with

FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Durga temple.

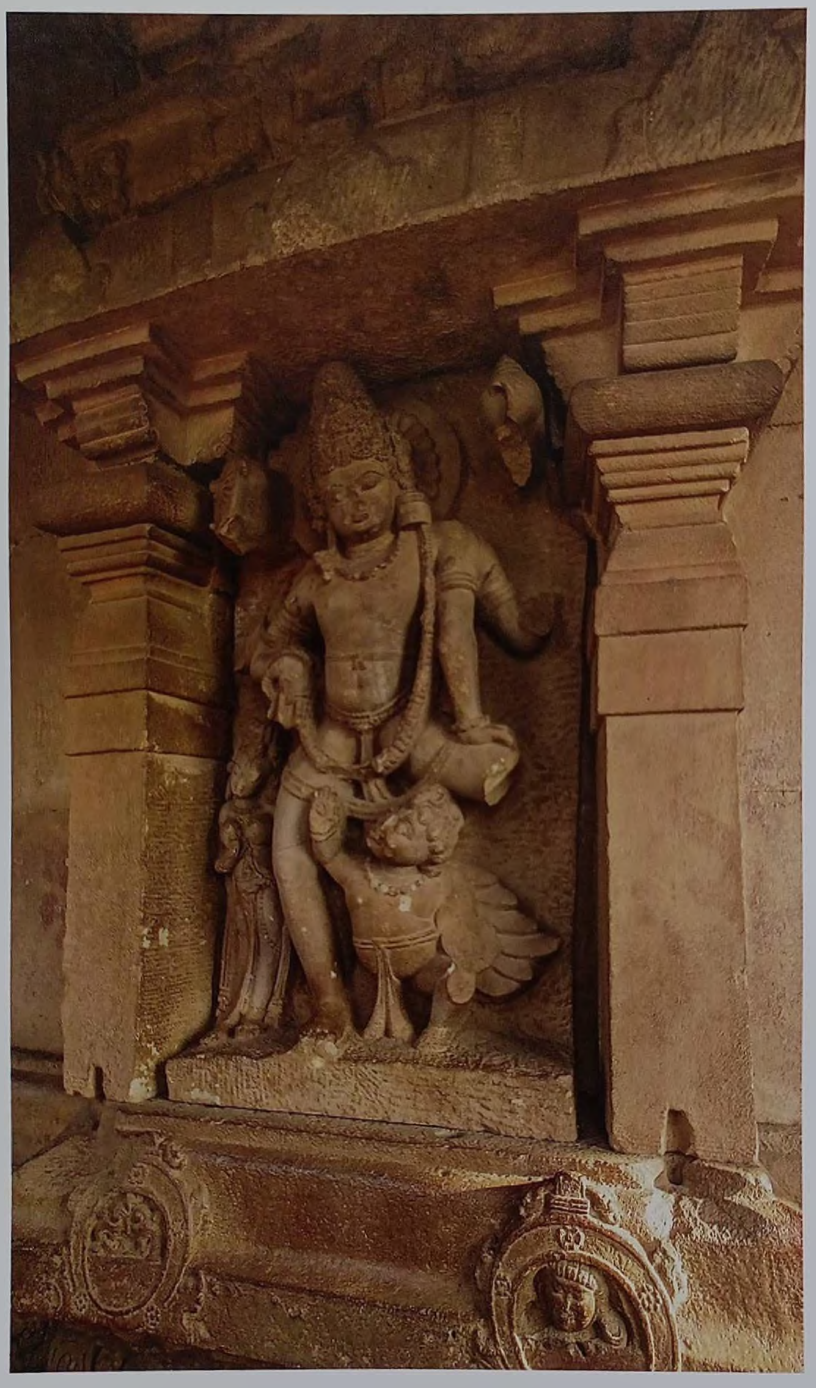
ABOVE
The Durga temple from the south-east.

FACING PAGE
Guardian figures on the columns flanking the entrance to the temple.

celestial couples surrounded by clouds, their heads angled and legs kicked back, with scarves billowing around their heads. Only damaged traces of these compositions can now be seen.

The interior porch columns are embellished with raised bands of jewelled garlands, and medallions filled with miniature courtly figures, flying celestials, lines of *gana* dancers and musicians. The outer faces of the frontal columns show embracing couples in swaying poses; the side faces have icons of dancing Ardhanarishvara (right) and Narasimha disembowelling his victim (left). Brackets with rolled ends and *yalis* carry beams and curving eaves. The beams within the porch (reinforced by modern, tusk-like struts) are surmounted by pilastered entablatures, with a small but discernible figure of two-armed Surya on the frontal (eastern) face. Raised horizontal roof slabs have ceiling compositions showing a wheel with fish spokes surrounded by luxuriant lotus ornament (east), and a Nagaraja with an encircling serpent body (west). The *mandapa* doorway is framed by fluted, foliate and serpent-bodied bands carrying a *kapota*. This is surmounted by a *kuta-shala-kapota* entablature, with *kudus* filled with miniature figures, possibly including a diminutive Surya icon. In the middle of the lintel is a flying Garuda, while beneath at either side are river goddesses, couples and female attendants.

Broken columns, beams, entablatures and ceilings of the *mandapa* interior have been restored. Raised, horizontal slabs roof the central aisle, with sloping slabs over the side aisles. The sanctuary doorway appears unfinished as well as damaged. An empty, unusual circular plinth stands within.



LEFT
Vishnu with Garuda; wall panel in the verandah of the Durga temple.

FACING PAGE
Colonnaded verandah in the temple.

Wall panels in the verandah of the Durga temple

RIGHT
Shiva with Nandi.

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Durga spearing the buffalo.

ABOVE
Unidentified narrative scenes; basement reliefs in the verandah of the Durga temple.

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Interior porch of the temple.

LEFT
Detail of the left-hand jamb of the *mandapa* doorway.

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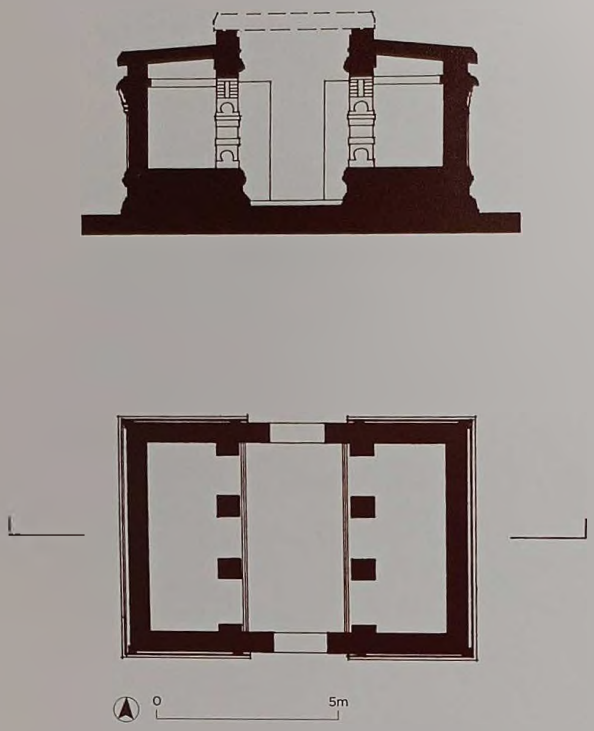
Mandapa doorway of the Durga temple.



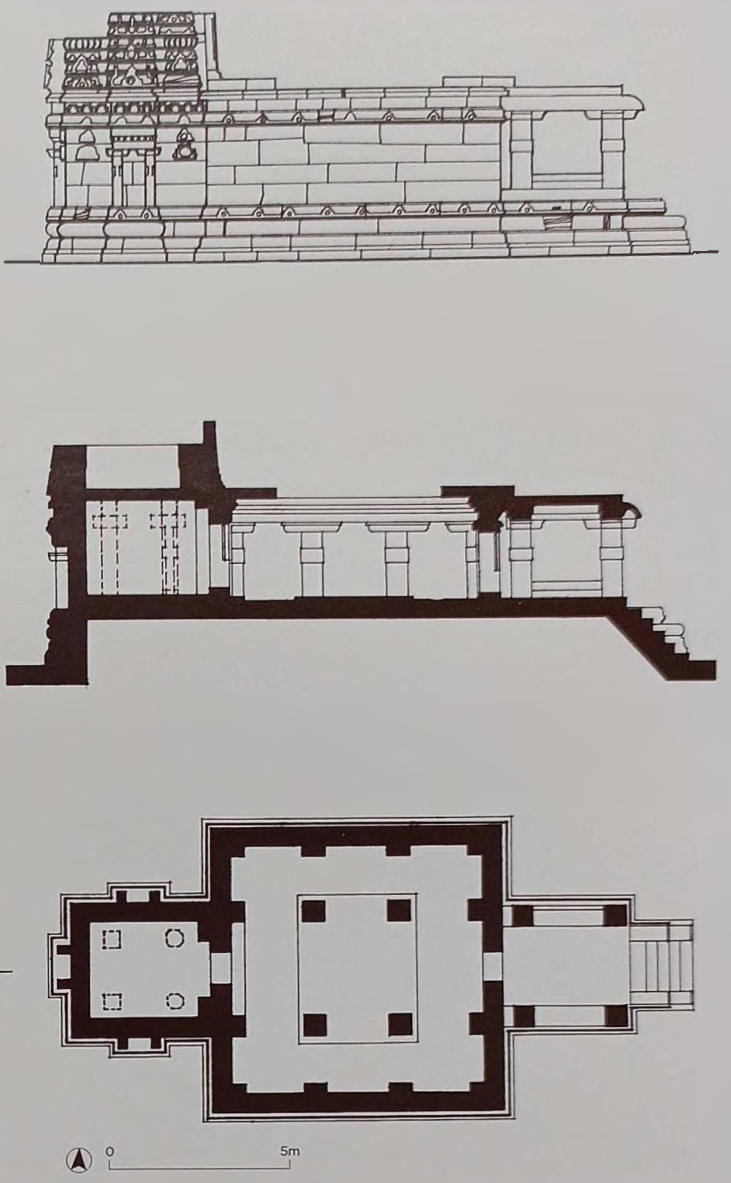
DURGA TEMPLE GATEWAY

A few metres south of the Durga temple is a free-standing gateway, with the inscription already referred to engraved onto its northern walls. Its central north-south passageway curiously is not aligned with the temple itself; there are no traces of any enclosure walls. The gateway's pilastered walls are raised on a simple tripartite basement, and overhung by a shallow *kapota* on a frieze of *hamsas*. The doorways leading to the central, north-south passageway are framed by recessed bands, but only that on the south preserves its *kapota* and *kuta-shala-kuta* entablature. A trefoil parapet element (original position unknown) above accommodates a diminutive icon of seated Surya. Columns with bands and part-circles and brackets with rolled ends, raised on a high basement, flank the ground-level passageway within.

SURYANARAYANA TEMPLE

This temple, which stands a short distance south-west of the Durga temple, consists of a sanctuary, a square, triple-aisled *mandapa* and a small porch with balustrade steps. Plain walls are raised on a tripartite basement with a central recessed course, replaced by a curved moulding at the sanctuary. Niches (empty) on three sides of the sanctuary are defined by pilasters carrying blocks with foliate decoration, incorporating peacocks (south). The niches are flanked by *gavaksha* motifs on the walls, not associated with any niches. Only the lower courses of the *shikhara* tower remain. In later times a block with a trefoil niche framing Surya riding in a horse-drawn chariot was placed against its frontal (east) face.

The *mandapa* columns have curved brackets that carry raised, horizontal roof slabs over the central aisle (mostly replaced). The sanctuary doorway has pilasters set in bands with lotus ornament and serpent bodies, with flying Garuda on the lintel. The entablature above has a trio of *gavaksha* motifs, with seated Surya in the central trefoil *gavaksha*. The imposing, standing Surya image in the sanctuary belongs to the Late Chalukya era.



ABOVE
Plan, section and elevation of the Suryanarayana temple.

FACING PAGE ABOVE
Plan and section of the gateway.

FACING PAGE BELOW
The Durga temple gateway from the south.

LAD KHAN TEMPLE

An outstanding example of the local, Malprabha style, this temple consists of a spacious *mandapa* with sixteen columns creating two concentric square aisles disposed around a central bay. Triple perforated windows are set into the middle of the north and south *mandapa* walls, with two similar windows on either side of the blank wall at the rear of a small rectangular sanctuary on the west. A triple-bayed entrance on the east gives access to a rectangular porch with twelve columns, with balcony seating on three sides. The porch is accessed by balustraded steps, somewhat rebuilt.

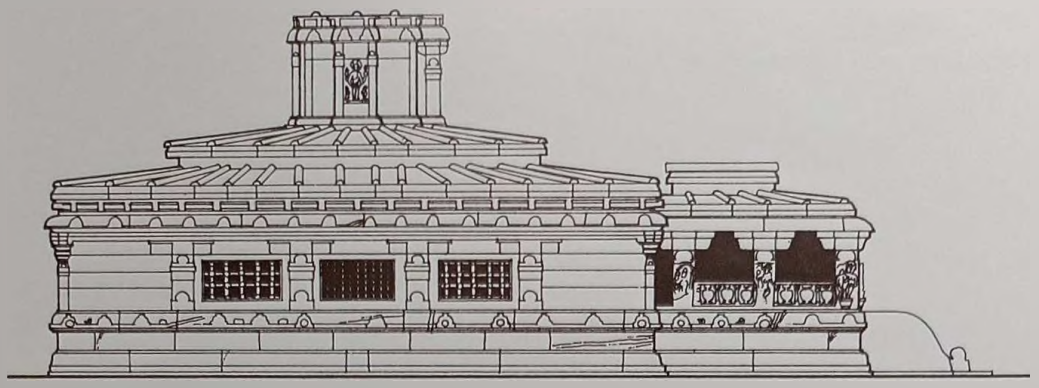
The temple's outer walls, raised on a simple tripartite basement topped by a *kapota* with *kudus*, are divided into pilastered bays on each side. The windows have geometric designs with miniature lotuses at the intersections of the bars. The walls are terminated by a *kapota* cornice carrying the bevelled ends of the sloping roof slabs. Log-like stone strips protect the joints between the slabs. A second tier of sloping roof slabs, also with log-like strips, is set at a higher level over the *mandapa*'s inner aisle. A small chamber serving as an upper sanctuary with a doorway on the east (empty) is built upon the roof over the *mandapa*'s central square bay. This chamber has pilastered projections on three sides framing icons of Vishnu (south), Surya riding in the chariot (west) and Ardhanarishvara (north, unfinished). Log-like stone strips protect its roof.

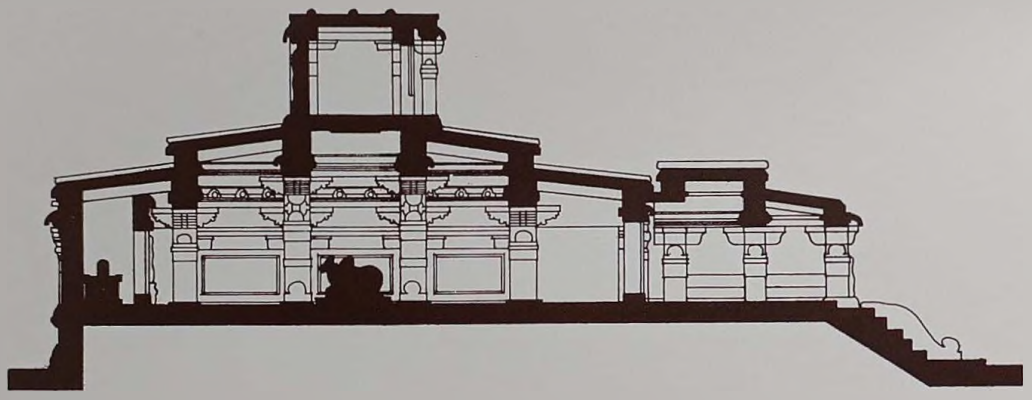
RIGHT
Window detail from the south wall of the temple.

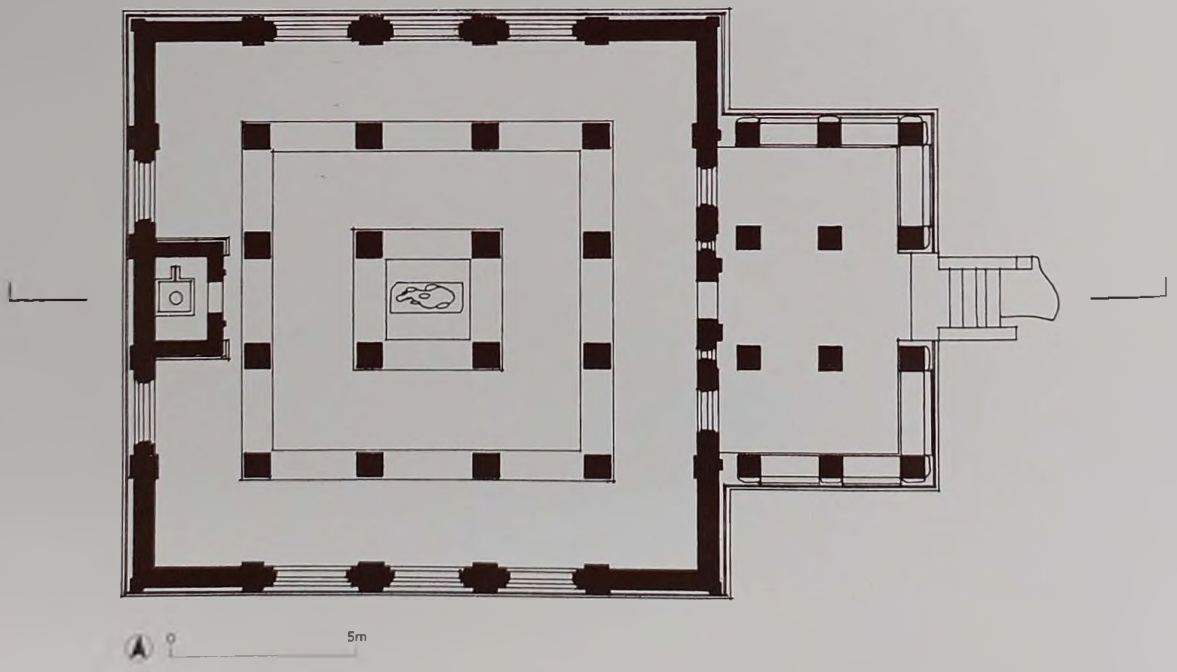
FACING PAGE
The Lad Khan temple from the north-east.

Access to the upper sanctuary is by means of a stone ladder set up within the porch, leading to a small hole in the roof. Peripheral porch columns have their outer faces embellished with river goddesses and embracing couples, beneath trees (eroded). One composition shows a horse-headed woman with a male companion. Column shafts have raised bands with looped and jewelled garlands incorporating monster masks and occasional *ganas*. Part-circles frame diverse deities, figures and animals, and even one instance of the Chalukya regal emblem, showing a boar with disc, conch and circular motif (unknown) on a stand (see page 11). Friezes of stylised pots between knotted loops enliven the outer faces of the balcony seating slabs placed (probably later) between the peripheral columns. Roof slabs of the porch are sloping over the side aisles, but raised and horizontal over the central two bays, where ceilings have panels filled with lotuses and flying couples (worn). As in the *mandapa*, the porch roof slabs have log-like protective strips. The *mandapa* doorway is framed by columns with square, curved capitals; windows with criss-cross petalled designs are set into the bays at either side.

Interior *mandapa* columns are linked by raised floor areas that define two concentric aisles around a central bay. The tops of the shafts of the higher, inner columns have narrow part-octagonal sections between part-circles. Brackets with rolled ends carry beams at different levels, corresponding to the different heights of the double-tiered sloping roof. An impressive, large Nandi is placed on the floor of the central bay. The animal faces towards the small rectangular sanctuary set against the west wall. Its doorway is framed by shallow pilasters flanked by guardians with elaborate hairdos, one holding a club (worn). A *linga* on a pedestal is installed within.



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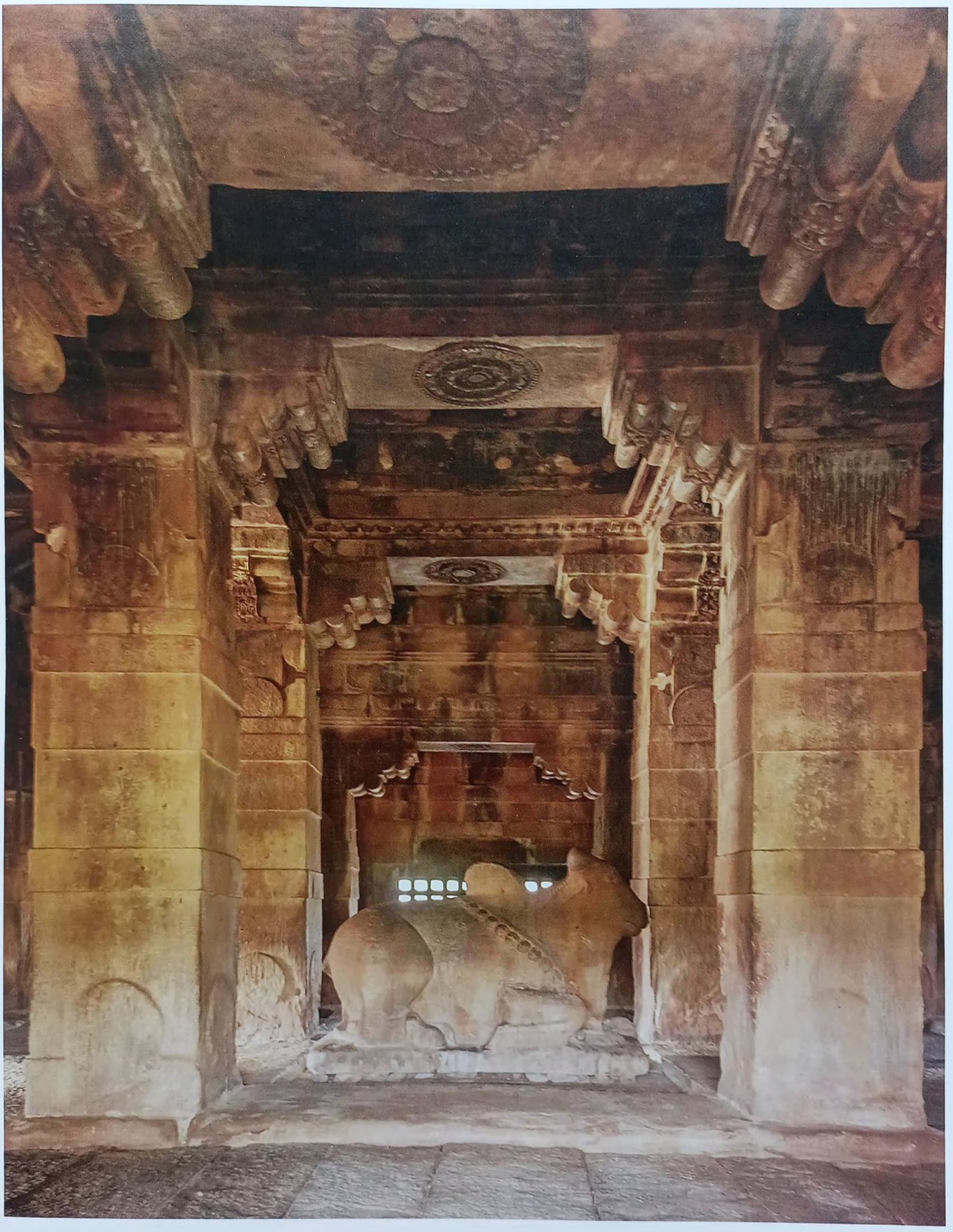
ABOVE
Couples beneath trees; column carvings in the Lad Khan temple porch.

FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Lad Khan temple.

ABOVE
Column details in the Lad Khan temple porch.

FACING PAGE
Interior of the temple, with a sculpted Nandi.



GAUDARGUDI

Located near a large stepped tank in the middle of the town, this temple built at a noticeably lower level than the structures that surround it, suggests that it may be one of the earliest temples in Aihole. It consists of a *mandapa*, open on four sides, with six by four peripheral columns linked by balcony slabs. A small, rectangular walled chamber is set within the *mandapa*, approached from the east through a triple-bayed *mandapa*. Balustraded access steps on the east have been much rebuilt.

Peripheral columns are raised on a simple tripartite basement with a capping *kapota* with *kudus* and a frieze of animals (worn). Balcony slabs (possibly later insertions) have their outer surfaces embellished with pots set between pilasters. The columns have plain brackets with curved ends that carry undercut, smoothly rounded eaves. These support the bevelled ends of the sloping slabs that roof the outer aisles of the *mandapa* on four sides. The sanctuary within and two of the *mandapa* bays in front (east) are roofed with raised horizontal slabs. They are concealed from view by a low parapet with a recessed pilastered course and *kapotas*.

An inscription engraved on the east face of the beam between the first pair of columns within the *mandapa* records a gift to the goddess 'Durga Bhagavati'. Beams defining the central two bays are adorned with elegant lotus ornament, as is the underside of the single transverse beam. The two ceiling panels here are damaged, in contrast to the sanctuary doorway, which is crisply preserved. Here, pilasters set within bands of lotus ornament carry an entablature with three miniature *gavakshas*, the central one showing a goddess seated on a lotus, with female attendants in the side *gavakshas*, which are capped with miniature *amalakas*. Open-mouthed *makaras* with leaping *yalis* grace the ends of the entablature. The sanctuary is empty; so, too, the niches on its outer walls. They are framed by pairs of pilasters carrying triangular pediments formed from pairs of half-*gavakshas* topped by complete *gavakshas*.

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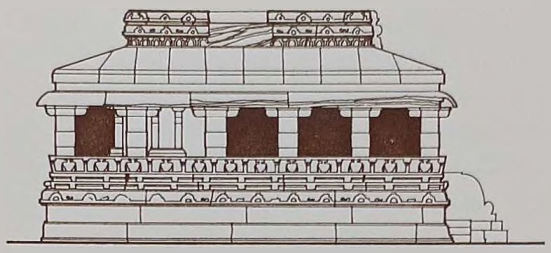
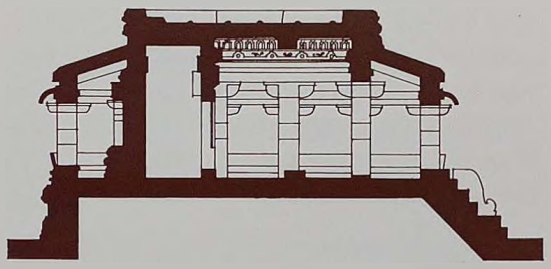
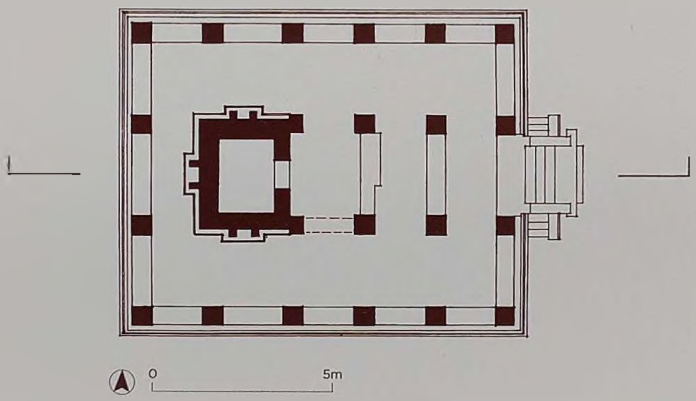
Plan, section and elevation of the Gaudargudi.

BELOW
The Gaudargudi from the north-east.



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TWO TEMPLES OF THE KUNTI GROUP

Located within the southern part of the town, this group consists of four temples, of which only the south-eastern and north-western temples are assigned to the Early Chalukya period; the other two, together with the portal that links the two northern examples, are additions of the Rashtrakuta period.

The south-eastern temple of the Kunti group is laid out as a square of nine bays, walled in on three sides, with a triple-bayed opening on the north. A small sanctuary set against the rear (south) wall is preceded by two columns. The walls and columns are raised on a basement with a line of rearing *yalis* and figures surmounted by a *kapota* (worn). The outer faces of the frontal columns, including those engaged into the side walls, are carved with embracing couples beneath trees. Curved brackets with fluted ends carry cut-out eaves over the columns, replaced by a *kapota* cornice over the side and rear walls. Double access steps on the north are flanked by basement mouldings topped with a large (probably misplaced) *gavaksha*.

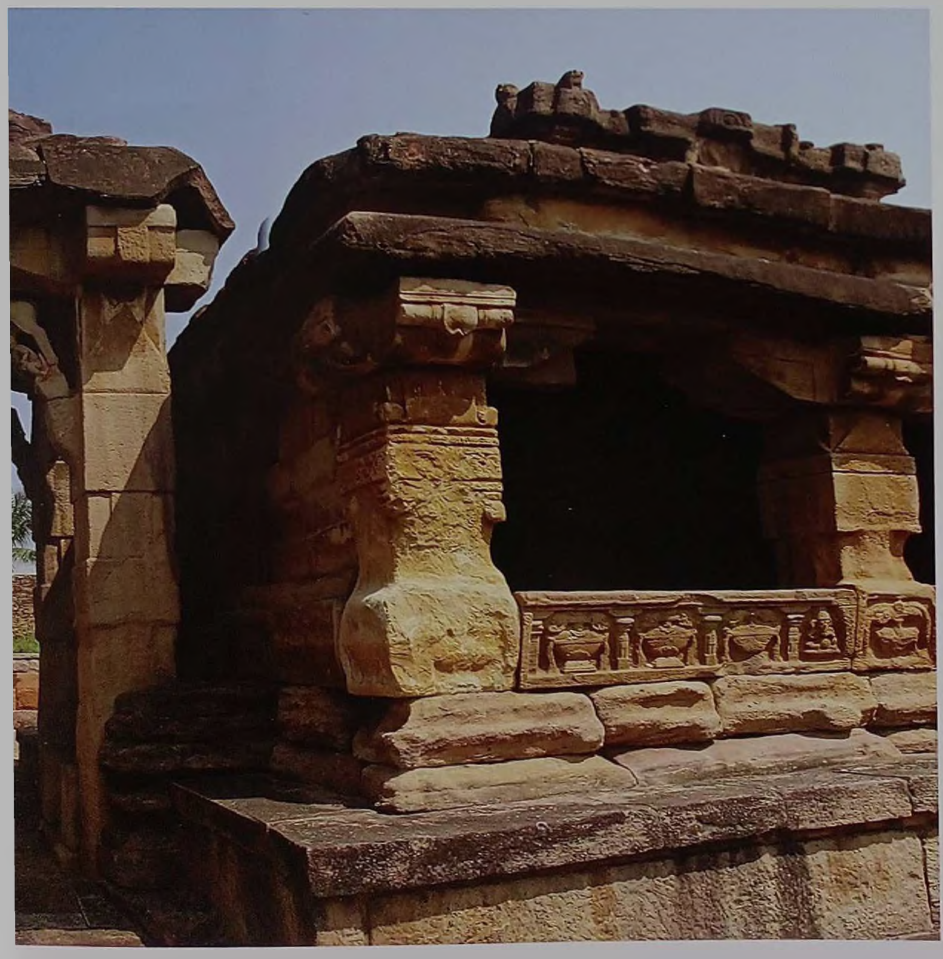
The doorway and walls set between the second row of columns creating an outer verandah within the south-east temple are later additions. The columns have bands decorated with garlands and part-circles filled with diminutive figures. The brackets have rolled ends. The sanctuary doorway has pilasters set between decorated bands rising on panels with river goddesses, couples and attendants. Garuda appears on the lintel. The pilasters carry an overhanging *kapota*, animal frieze and a *kuta-shala-kuta* entablature. The roof slabs are raised and horizontal over the central bay (replaced), but sloping over the bays on four sides. (This means that the sanctuary roof is unusually sloping, suggesting that the sanctuary may be a later insertion.)

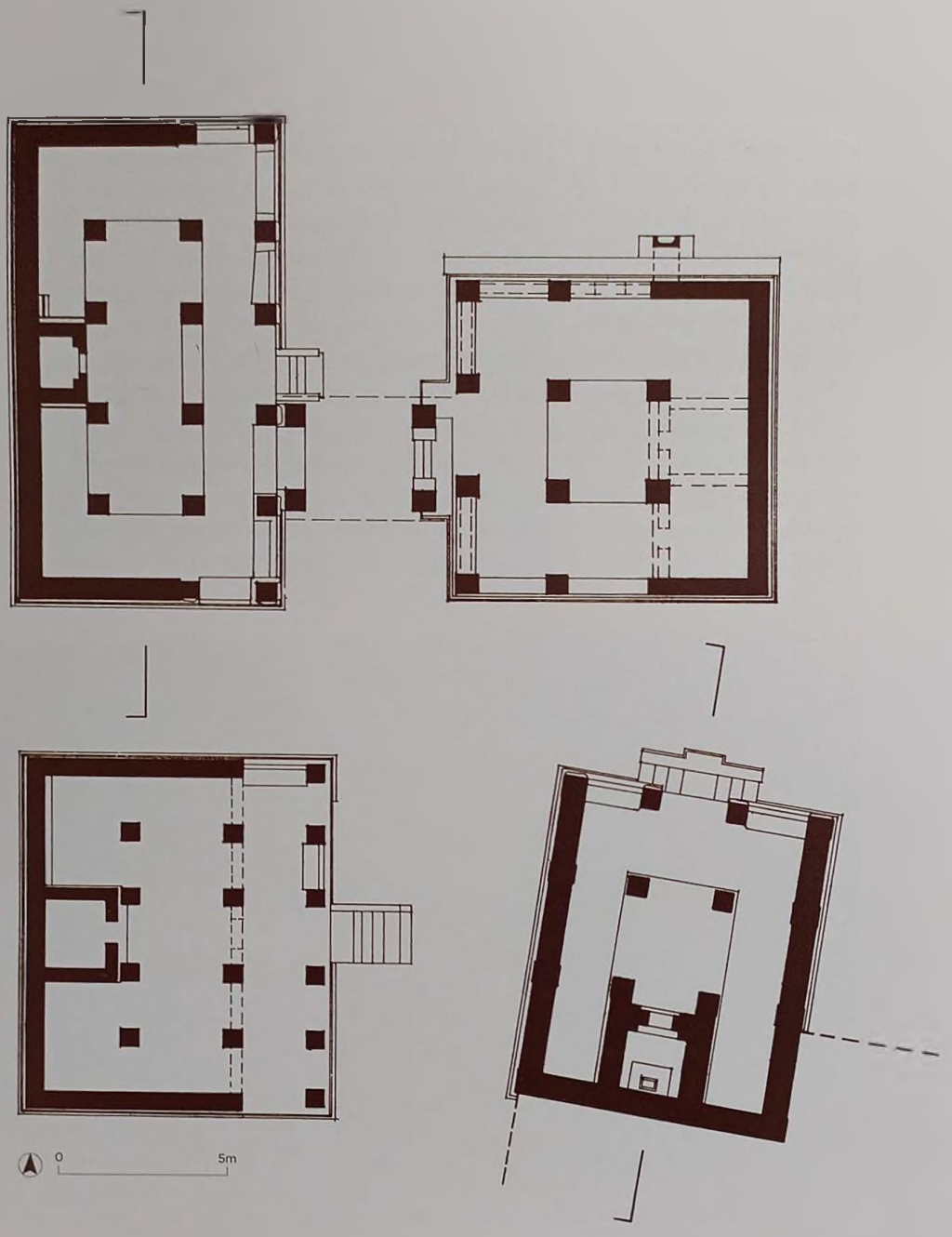
RIGHT
Portal between the two northern temples of the Kunti group.

EXTREME RIGHT
Brahma ceiling panel in the north-west temple.

The east-facing, north-western temple of the Kunti group has fifteen bays creating three internal aisles. The rear two (western) aisles are walled in on three sides, but the front (east) aisle is conceived as a porch, open on three sides. Set against the middle of the rear wall is a small sanctuary. The porch columns are raised on a tripartite basement (worn) with angled balcony slabs partly finished with ornamental pot motifs. The outer surfaces of the porch columns have carvings of couples, as well as single figures too eroded to be identified. Curved brackets carry the cut-out eaves over the open porch, replaced by a *kapota* over the walls to the sides and rear. Sloping slabs roof the outer bays on four sides.

The two lines of four columns within the temple have bands and part-circles with connecting strips, all embellished with lotus motifs, scrollwork and jewelled garlands. Four-armed guardians, leaning on clubs and carrying tridents in one of their rear hands, are sculpted onto the columns either side of the sanctuary. The columns have curved brackets, with beams above carrying entablatures over the central three bays. The two transverse beams, carried on *yali* brackets, have flying warriors on their undersides. The raised and horizontal roof slabs have ceiling panels with seated Shiva and Parvati, flanked by Brahma seated on a lotus (south), and Vishnu sleeping on Shesha (north), each surrounded by lotus bands. The sanctuary doorway has a pair of pilasters set between decorated bands, with Garuda on the lintel. A *kapota* and transitional courses above are topped by a five-part entablature. The side walls of the sanctuary have niches with an eight-armed icon of dancing Shiva (south), and a standing four-armed Vishnu (north).





ABOVE
Plan of the four temples of the Kunti group.

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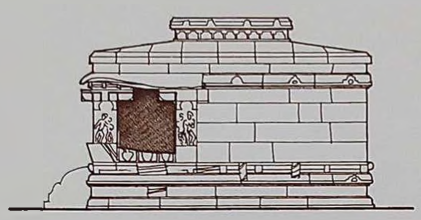
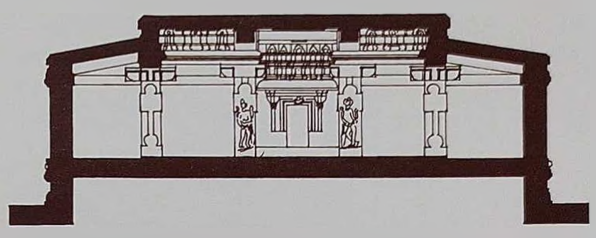
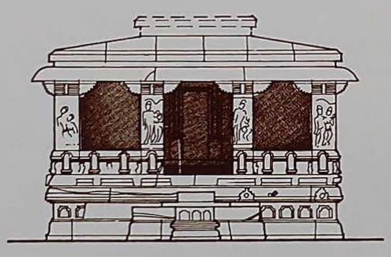
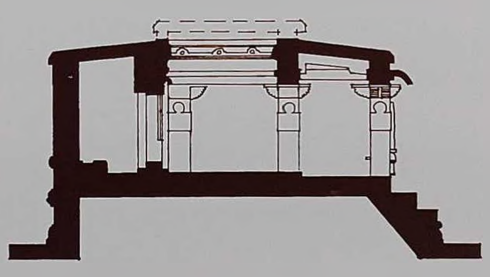
Elevations and sections of the north-western temple (above) and south-eastern temple (below).









ABOVE
The Hucchappayyamatha from the south-east.

FACING PAGE
Column carving on the temple porch.

HUCCHAPPAYYAMATHA

Located at a short distance south of the Kunti group, but within Aihole's ramparts, this temple consists of a sanctuary opening into a triple-aisled *mandapa*, the frontal (east) three bays being open as a porch (later filled in). The walls and open porch are raised on a tripartite basement, which are continued beside the entrance steps on the front, though with a curved moulding replacing the recessed course. The walls are plain, except for regularly spaced *gavaksha* motifs unconnected to any niches. Similar motifs flank the pilastered niches (empty) topped by *kapotas* on three sides of the towerless sanctuary. The walls are terminated by a *kapota*, replaced by cut-out curving eaves on the front. The four porch columns have their outer surfaces carved with amorous couples, one pair showing a horse-headed woman accompanied by a grimacing male. The side faces of the columns flanking the central bay show single maidens beneath trees. Intermediate balcony slabs have their outer surfaces carved with leaping *yalis* and diminutive figures capped with a *kapota*.

The interior *mandapa* columns have undecorated raised bands and part-circles and curved brackets. The beams above are embellished with intricate foliate friezes. These continue onto the undersides of the transverse beams carrying the raised roof slabs over the central three bays. Ceiling compositions here show (from east to west): Vishnu on Shesha, his head shielded by cobra hoods, in the company of flying celestials; Shiva and Parvati on Nandi; and Brahma riding through the clouds on the goose, in the company of sages. Each deity is framed by flying celestials between lotuses, contained with bands of scrollwork. Columns beside the sanctuary doorway have their outer faces carved with couples beneath trees, and guardians with fluted clubs on their side faces (flanking the doorway). The doorway has pilasters with cut-out *yalis* at the capitals carrying a *kapota*, intermediate pilastered courses, and an entablature with five parapet elements enhanced by *gavakshas*, some of them trefoil. Garuda appears on the doorway lintel, and maidens and couples beneath at either side.

ABOVE
Shiva riding on Nandi; ceiling panel in the Hucchappayyamatha.

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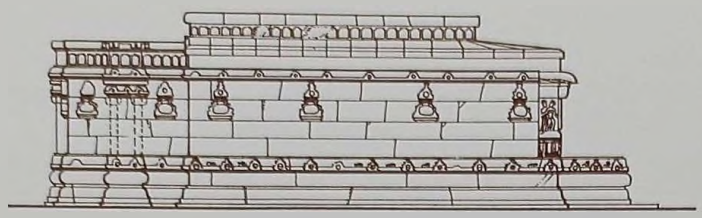
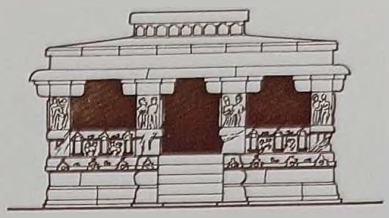
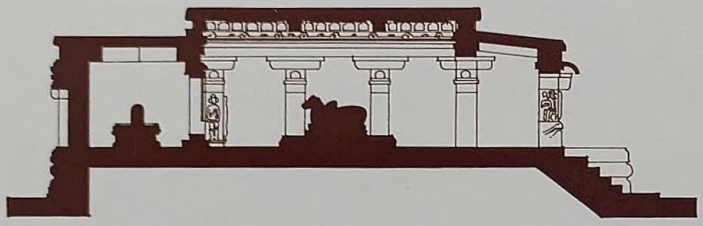
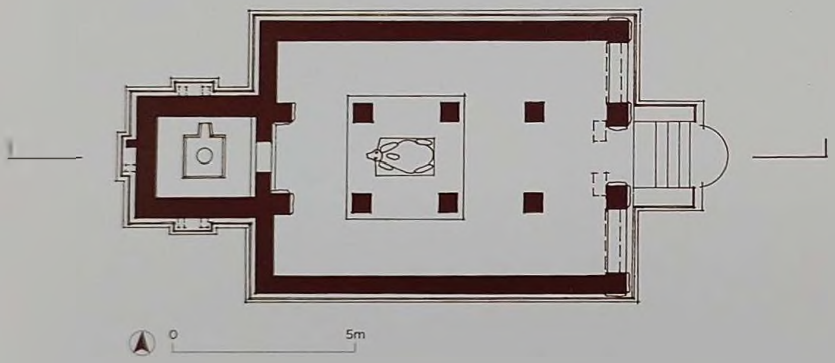
Plan, section and elevations of the Hucchappayyamatha.





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HUCCHAPPAYYAGUDI

This temple stands in the fields some 500 metres south of the town's ramparts. Its sanctuary is topped with a *shikhara* tower of standard design, with a *gavaksha* panel placed against its frontal (east) face containing a Nataraja icon, but without a capping *amalaka* finial. Pilastered niches on three sides of the sanctuary frame icons of Narasimha (west) and Nataraja (north); the south niche is empty. Niches (empty) on the two short east segments of the *mandapa* walls have pairs of pilasters carrying *makaras* with elaborate tails. The basement beneath the walls is tripartite, but beneath the niches there are additional part-octagonal mouldings and shorter capping *kapotas*. The *kapota* that serves as a cornice at the top of the walls carries a recessed course and the ends of the sloping slabs of the *mandapa* interior.

Though the columns of the triple-aisled *mandapa* are unadorned, the beams above are elaborately treated with friezes of lotus stalks and petalled patterns, and lines of animated *ganas*. Miniature panels framed by half-*gavakshas* in the entablatures above portray Agni on the ram, and Narasimha assaulting his victim (north), Yama on the buffalo, and Varaha (south), and Trivikrama (east). Lakshmi with elephants is seen on the beam above the entrance doorway. Brackets fashioned as rearing lions emerging from open-jawed *makaras* carry transverse beams with lotus medallions on the undersides (one half broken). The ceiling compositions on the raised and horizontal roof slabs over the central aisle have now been removed to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in Mumbai. They portray Vishnu asleep on Shesha, Shiva and Parvati on Nandi, and Brahma surrounded by clouds and sages. (A comparison with a similar trio of ceiling compositions in the Hucchappayyamatha would suggest that this would have been the correct east-west sequence.) Modern replacement roof slabs have now been introduced. Columns on either side of the sanctuary doorway have carvings of four-armed guardians holding tridents, leaning on bulbous clubs. The column faces flanking the doorway show Ganesha (left) and Durga slaying the buffalo (right), both in shallow niches headed by *gavakshas*. The doorway has pilasters set in decorated bands, with Garuda on the lintel. The entablature above is adorned with interlocking *gavakasha* motifs headed by a central *shala* and side *amalakas*. A *linga* set into a square pedestal is installed within.

The porch basement has a central recessed course with a frieze of lions and *yalis*. The outer faces of the porch columns have couples, including two showing horse-headed maidens embracing bearded males. The side faces of the columns at the rear of the porch have four-armed guardians. The doorway here repeats that of the sanctuary within. A Nataraja icon is carved on the porch ceiling.

Ceiling panels from the Hucchappayyagudi (now in the Chhatrapti Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai)

ABOVE
Brahma with rishis (top); Shiva with Parvati.

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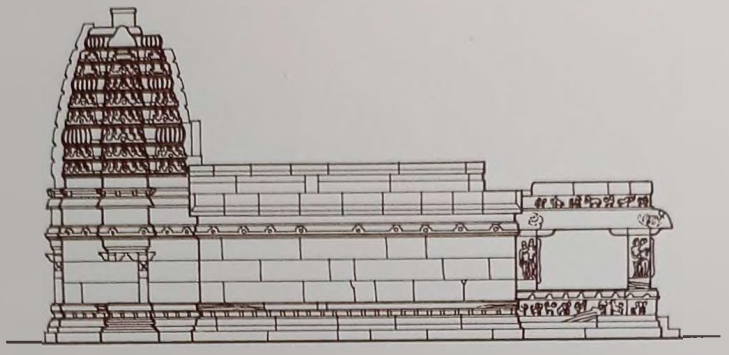
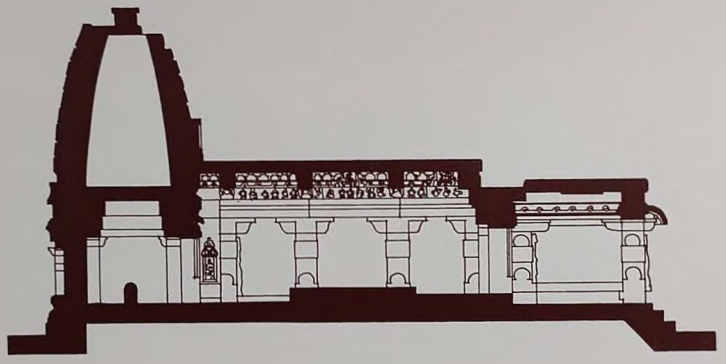
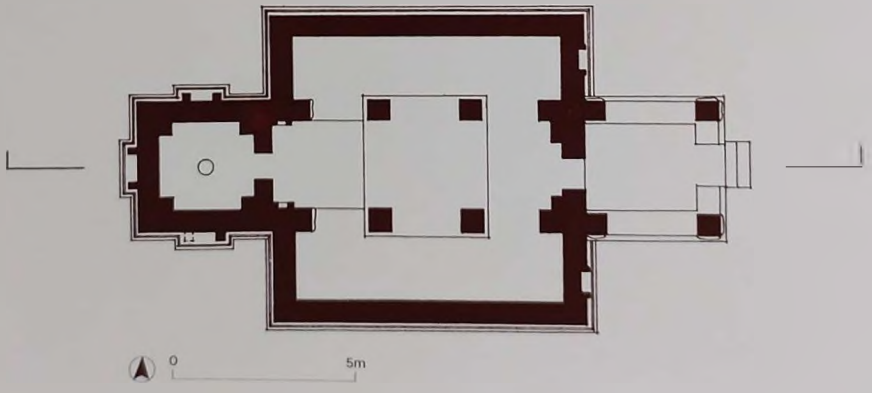
Vishnu asleep on Sesha.



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ABOVE
The Hucchappayyagudi from the south-east.

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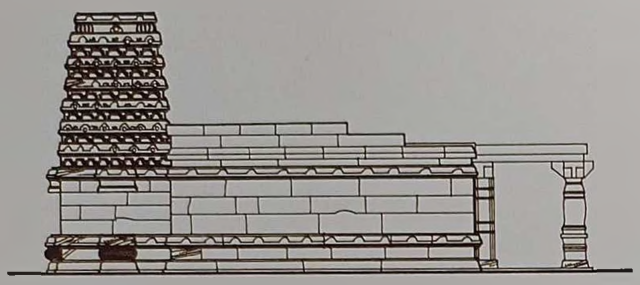
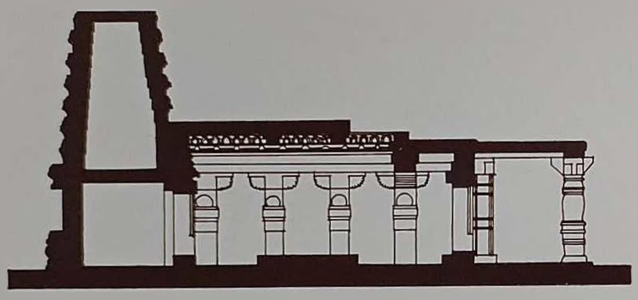
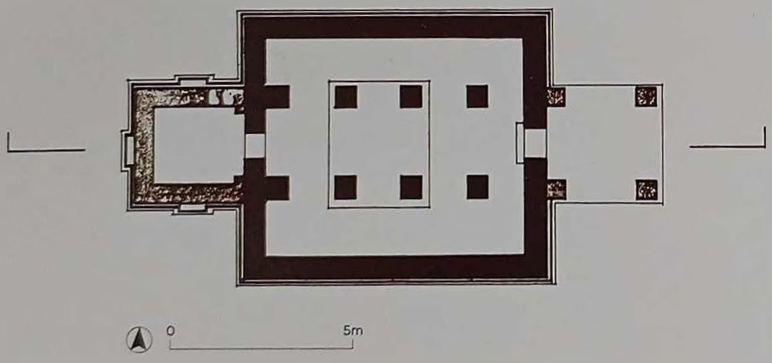
Plan, section and elevation of the Hucchappayyagudi.







ABOVE
Plan, section and elevation of the Galaganatha temple.

FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Tarappa temple.

GALAGANATHA TEMPLE

Overlooking the Malprahba river, about 1 kilometre south of Aihole, this temple consists of a triple-aisled *mandapa* and sanctuary with a Deccan styled, pyramidal tower. The sanctuary walls have niches on three sides raised on a basement with a central, curved faceted moulding. The pilasters framing the niches on three sides of the sanctuary and the sculpted panels installed here are now missing. The tower above has five diminishing tiers of *kapotas*, separated by deeply recessed pilastered bands. Miniature, flattish *amalakas* are seen at the corners in the topmost recess beneath the capping *kapota*. No finial is preserved.

The *mandapa* columns have plain bands and part-circles, the brackets are rounded with fluted ends. These carry beams with foliate decoration that extends onto the transverse beams (without brackets). A single ceiling composition is preserved over the bay in front of the sanctuary. Though much worn, the figure of Brahma can be made out. Another ceiling panel, with Vishnu on Garuda, has been placed on the roof, against the frontal (east) face of the tower. A third panel, showing Shiva seated with Parvati, now in the Mumbai Museum, is likely to belong to the same series. (The two displaced ceiling panels have now been replaced by modern roof slabs.) The sanctuary doorway has panels with maidens and female attendants beneath at either side, with Garuda on the lintel. Pilasters carry a *kapota* with triple projections, and an entablature headed by three larger *gavakshas* and two smaller intermediate *gavakshas*. The sanctuary is empty.

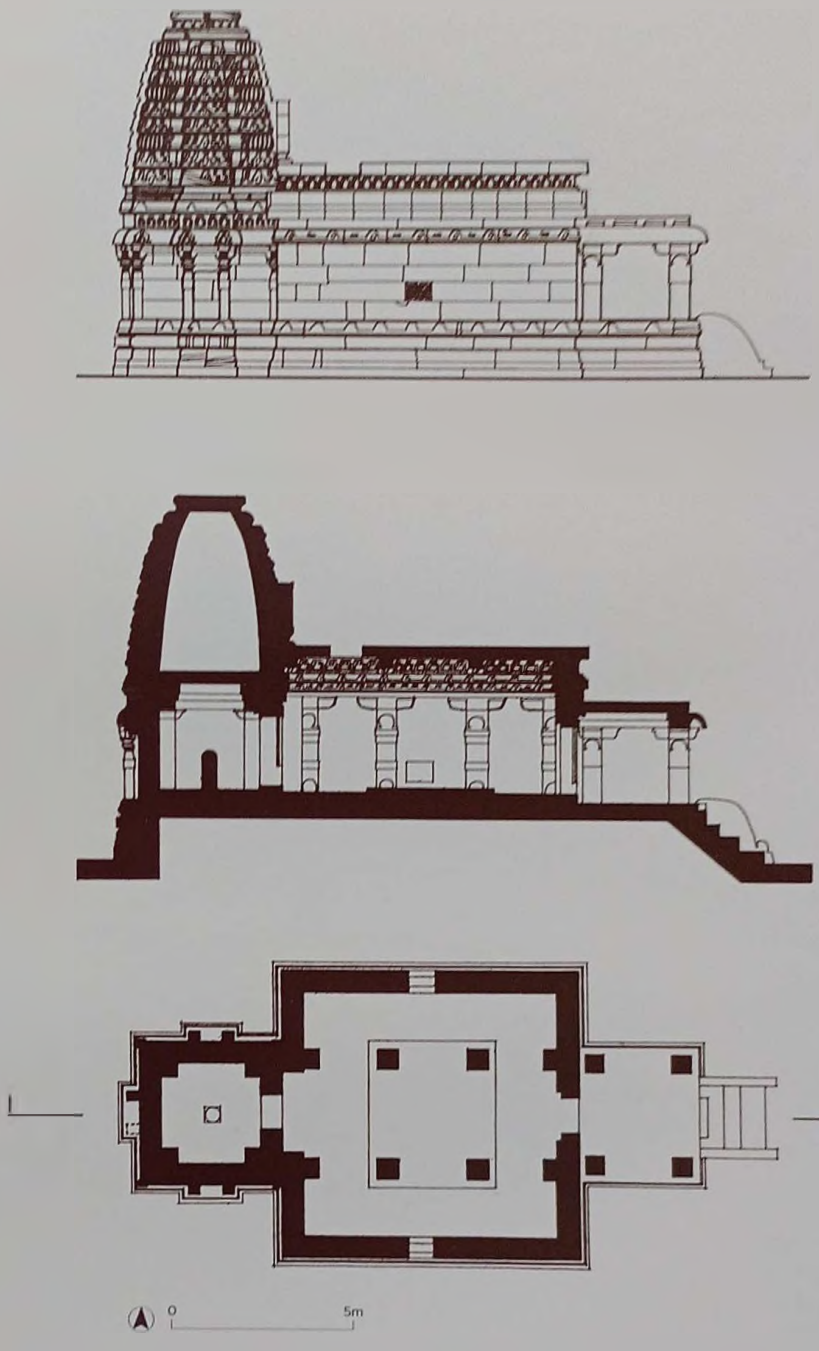
The porch that shelters the *mandapa* doorway is a later addition.

TARAPPA TEMPLE

Located about 1 kilometre north of Aihole, this temple consists of a sanctuary, a triple-aisled *mandapa* and a small porch with balustrade steps. The *mandapa* walls are plain, with a tripartite basement beneath, and a *kapota* cornice above carrying the angled slabs that roof the north and south *mandapa* aisles. The basement of the sanctuary walls has a curved central moulding, replaced by blocks beneath the niches on three sides. The niches (empty) are created from pairs of pilasters with fluted brackets, not contiguous with the wall, carrying separate *kapotas*. The corners of the sanctuary walls have shallow, full-height pilasters (not on the *mandapa* walls). The *shikhara* tower above has triple facets of diminishing tiers of *kapotas* with *gavakshas*, with *amalakas* positioned at the corners. An enlarged *gavaksha* framing a Nataraja icon is placed on the roof against the tower.

Interior columns have curved brackets with rolled ends that carry double *kapota* cornices and recessed pilastered entablatures above the central three bays. Brackets fashioned as crouching, squatting and dancing *ganas*, as well as lions at the corners, carry the transverse beams, but no ceiling panels are preserved. The sanctuary doorway has pilasters with leaping *yalis* beside the capitals carrying an elaborate entablature. This has trefoil-headed *gavaksha* niches framing icons of Nataraja between Brahma and Vishnu, with outward-facing *makara* heads at the sides. Garuda appears over the lintel. A *linga* on a low pedestal is seen within the sanctuary.

A large Nandi is placed outside. Stone fragments set up beneath a nearby tree include the upper portion of the *gavaksha* panel on the front face of the temple's tower.

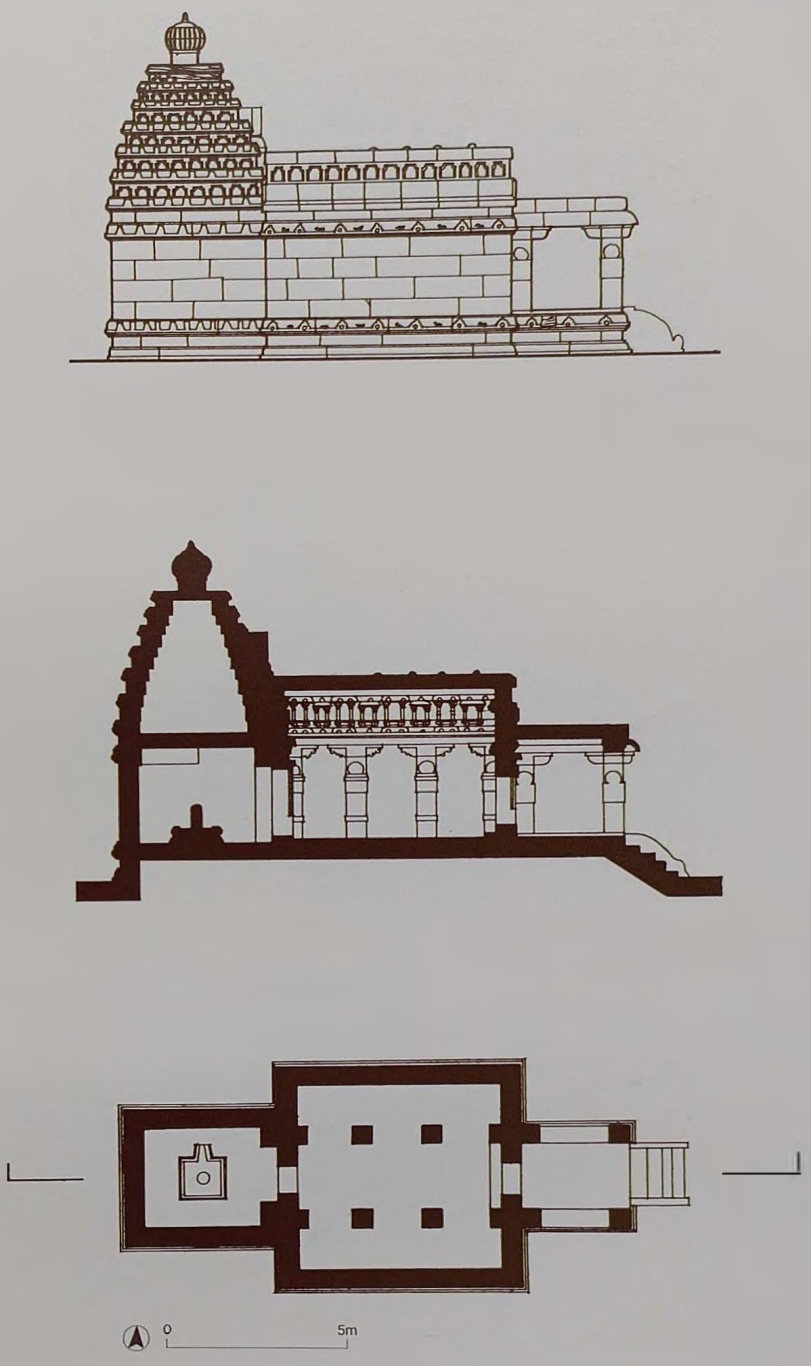


MALLIKARJUNA TEMPLE

Located a short distance east of Aihole's ramparts, beneath the northern flank of Meguti hill, this temple is surrounded by later structures, including a large tank and a free-standing portal. The temple has a towered sanctuary, triple-aisled *mandapa* and porch. Its plain walls are raised on a tripartite basement and terminated by a *kapota* cornice. The Deccan styled pyramidal tower over the sanctuary has eight diminishing tiers of *kapotas*, separated by recessed pilastered courses, topped with an *amalaka* finial.

Columns within the *mandapa* have decorated bands and part-circles. Brackets with rolled ends carry *kapotas* and pilastered entablatures over the central aisle. The raised horizontal roof slabs here, however, are replacements, but not the sloping slabs over the side aisles. The sanctuary doorway has pilasters carrying a *kapota* topped by a *kuta-shala-kuta* entablature. Garuda is placed over the lintel, and figural panels are seen beneath at either side. Within the sanctuary is a *linga* on a pedestal.

The four porch columns, one with a decorated shaft, and plain curved brackets, are overhung by curved eaves. The ceiling within has a lotus design.



ABOVE
Plan, section and elevation of the Mallikarjuna temple.

FACING PAGE
View of the temple from the south-east.

HUCCHIMALLIGUDI

Located near the Ravanaphadi, to the north of Aihole, this temple has an inscription on its western wall dated 708, noting a grant of oil to the deity (unspecified). This does not seem to be a foundation record.

The temple faces unusually west, towards a stepped tank (restored) incorporating blocks carved with deities and a Kiratarjuniya scene. The temple is laid out with a rectangle of walls containing a sanctuary surrounded by a passageway with windows on three sides, and a triple-aisled *mandapa* entered through a small porch.

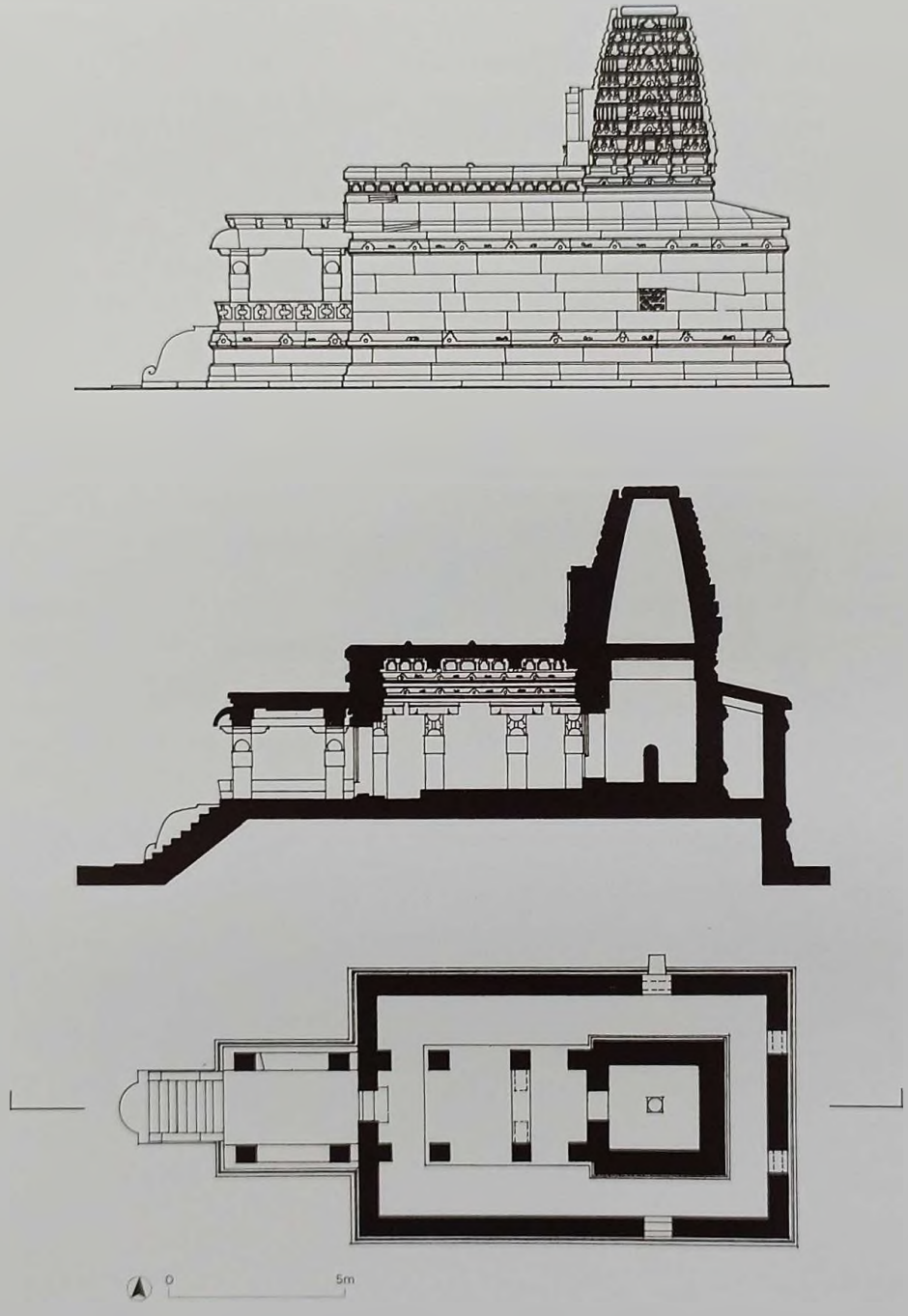
The plain walls rise on a tripartite basement. A *kapota* cornice carries the bevelled ends of the sloping slabs over the passageway and the north and south *mandapa* aisles. The *shikhara* tower above the sanctuary has triple facets of superimposed *kapotas* with *gavaksha* ornament, along with diminutive *amalakas* at the corners. An enlarged *gavaksha* on the tower's frontal (west) face contains an icon of Nataraja.

The *mandapa* columns are plain, except for tiny octagonal sections between part-circles at the tops of the shafts. Brackets with cut-out petalled motifs, beams and entablatures carry raised and horizontal slabs over the central aisle. (The external joints of these roof slabs are protected by log-like stone strips.) A ceiling panel over the central bay has a nine-panelled composition with a lotus surrounded by diminutive figures. A stone doorway flanked by perforated screens between two columns is a later insertion. The sanctuary doorway is framed by pilasters carrying an entablature with a *kapota* adorned with half-*gavakshas* carrying a trefoil *gavaksha* in the middle, and simpler *gavakshas* at the sides. The pilasters are set between bands enlivened with lotus patterns, serpent bodies and small panels framing diminutive couples. Garuda appears on the lintel, and maidens accompanied by couples, and even elephants, are seen beneath at either side. A finely finished *linga*, without pedestal, is set up inside the sanctuary. The sanctuary's outer walls (within the passageway) are raised on a tripartite basement, but are otherwise plain.

The porch has balcony slabs with pots framed by pilasters carved on the outer surfaces. The columns have raised bands and part-circles, with curved brackets carrying cut-out, overhanging eaves. The porch has a unique ceiling panel showing Karttikeya riding on the peacock. Access steps are flanked by curved balustrades.

RIGHT
Karttikeya on the peacock; ceiling panel in the Hucchimalligudi porch.

FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Hucchimalligudi.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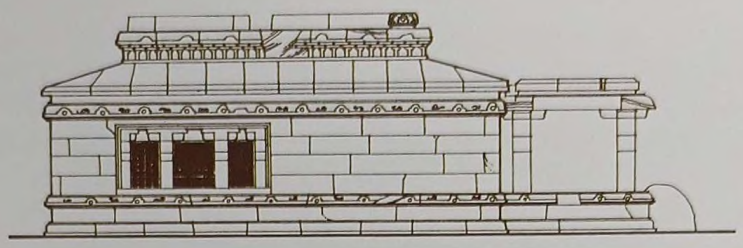

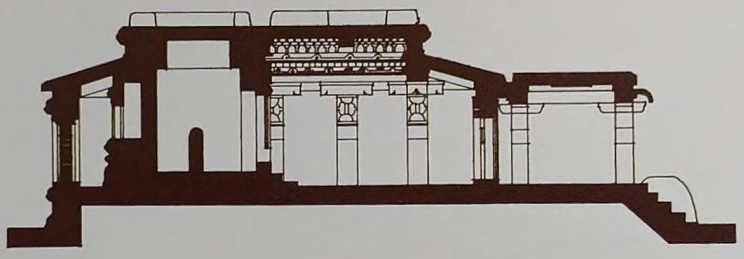

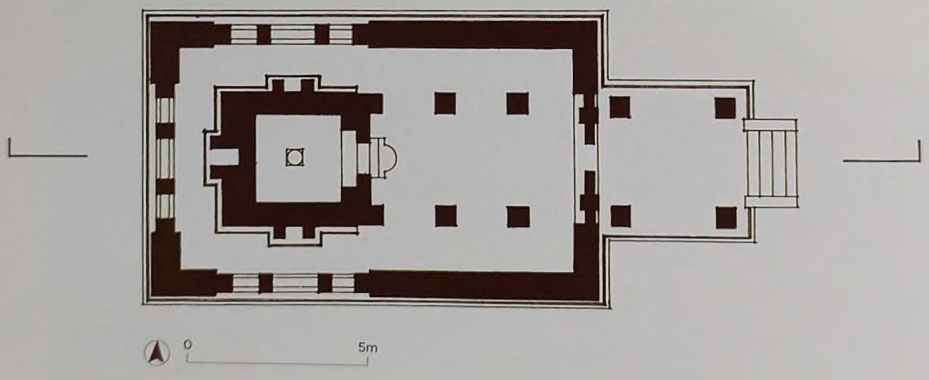
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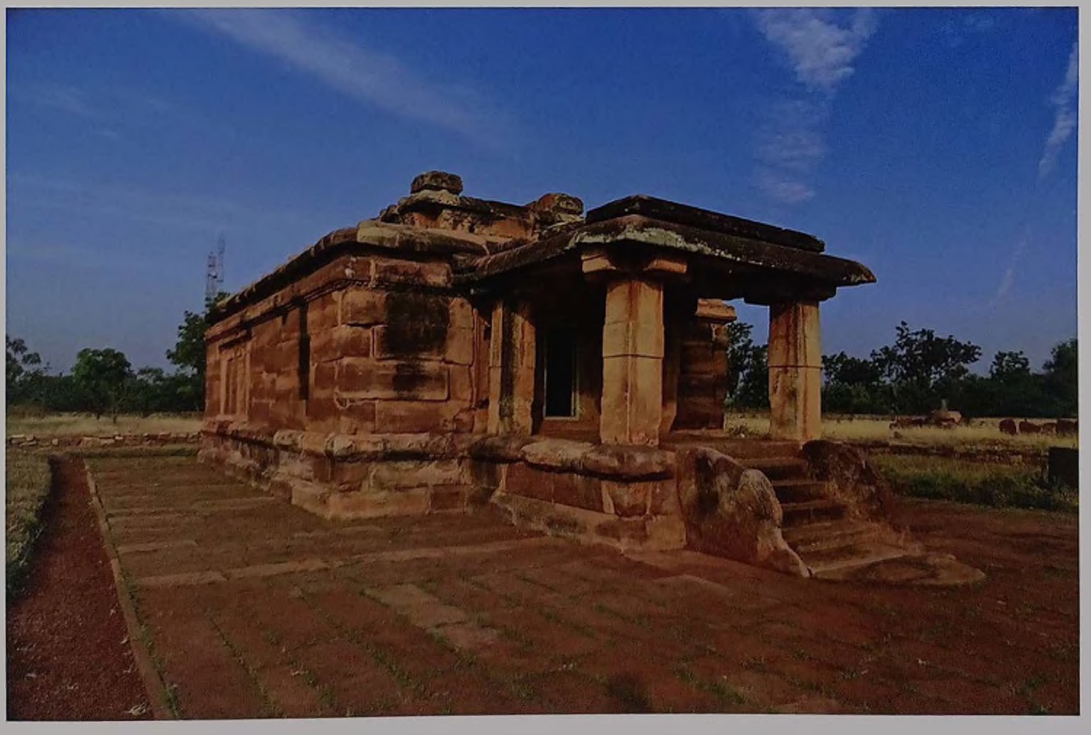
CHIKKIGUDI

Situated just a short distance north-west of the town's ramparts, the Chikkigudi has a sanctuary surrounded on three sides by a passageway opening into a triple-aisled *mandapa*, all set within a rectangle of walls, with a small porch on the east. The walls are raised on a tripartite basement topped by a *kapota* with *kudus* between miniature animals. The walls have a capping *kapota* cornice carrying the bevelled ends of the sloping slabs that roof the passageway and the exterior aisles of the *mandapa* on three sides. Triple perforated windows with geometric patterns admit light on three sides of the passageway. The windows are framed by columns set into the walls, with curved brackets carved in relief on the beams above. Raised and horizontal slabs roofing the sanctuary and the two *mandapa* bays in front are concealed by a low *kapota* parapet on a recessed pilastered course. There is no tower.

The *mandapa* interior preserves elaborately worked decoration. Column shafts have part-octagonal upper sections between part-circles embellished with lotus flowers and fanciful foliation, occasionally with birds. The bands show leaping *yalis*, some with miniature riders, set within jewelled garlands. The brackets, with flowing petalled designs on the sides and lotuses on the undersides, carry *kapotas* and recessed pilastered courses. Squatting *gana* brackets support transverse beams with petalled bands and lotuses on the undersides. The raised and horizontal roof slabs over two bays of the central aisle have ceilings with ornate lotuses ringed by petals. The flowers are each set between two small rectangular panels depicting: Vishnu asleep on Shesha, and Trivikrama (east), and Shiva spearing Andhaka, and Nataraja (west). The sanctuary doorway has a pair of pilasters set in bands of foliate ornament carrying an entablature with trefoil-headed *gavaksha* niches framing standing figures of Shiva with Nandi flanked by Brahma and Vishnu. Garuda appears over the lintel, and diminutive maidens beneath. A *linga* is set up within the sanctuary, but there is no pedestal.

The *mandapa* doorway within the porch, with recessed bands but no pilasters, is set between narrow openings (now filled in). The porch columns carry undercut, smoothly curved eaves. Traces of a worn lotus medallion are seen on the ceiling.



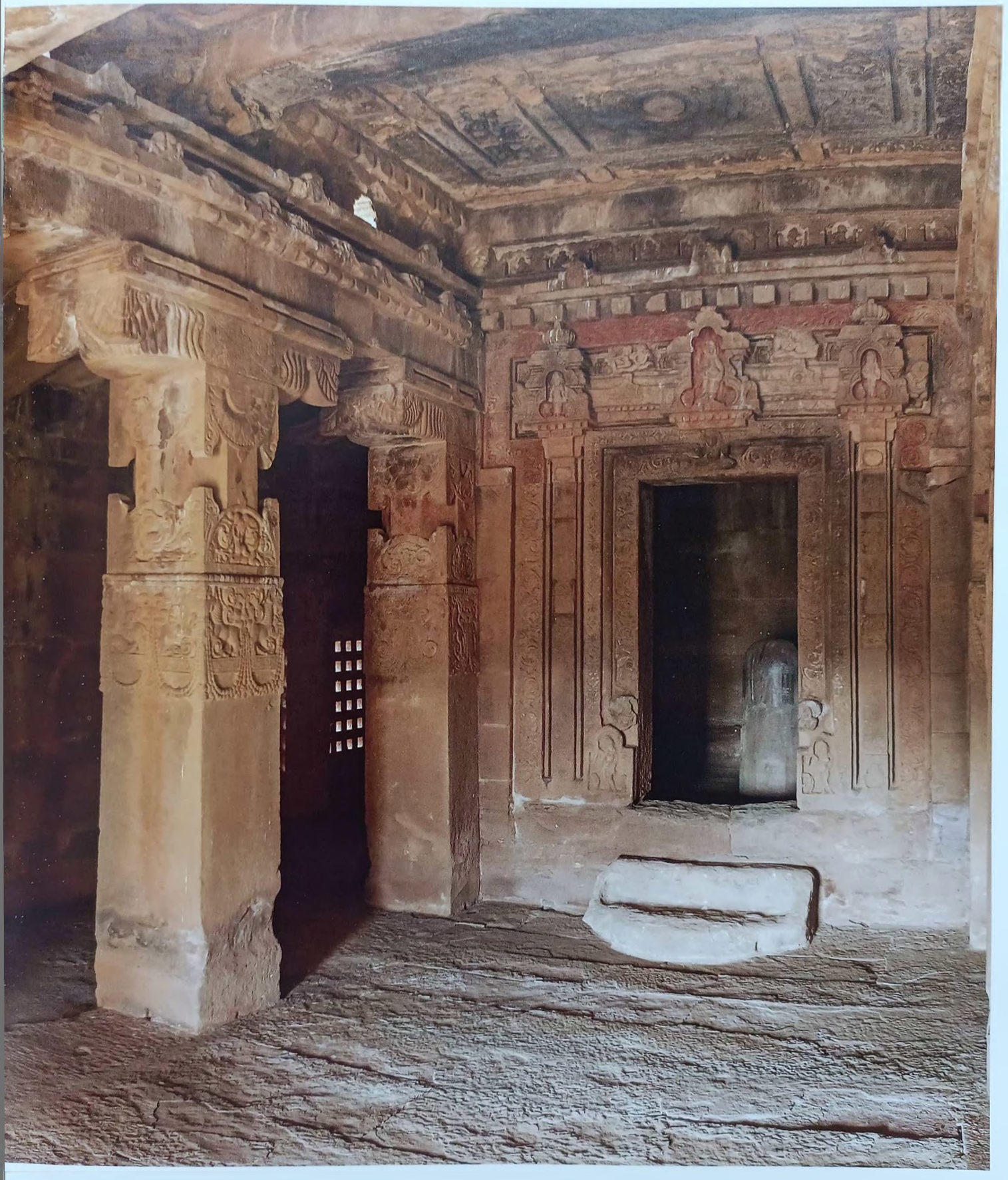
LEFT
The Chikkigudi from the south-east.

FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Chikkigudi.

ABOVE
Details of the interior columns.

RIGHT
Mandapa interior of the Chikkigudi.

FOLLOWING PAGES
Ceiling panels in the *mandapa*.



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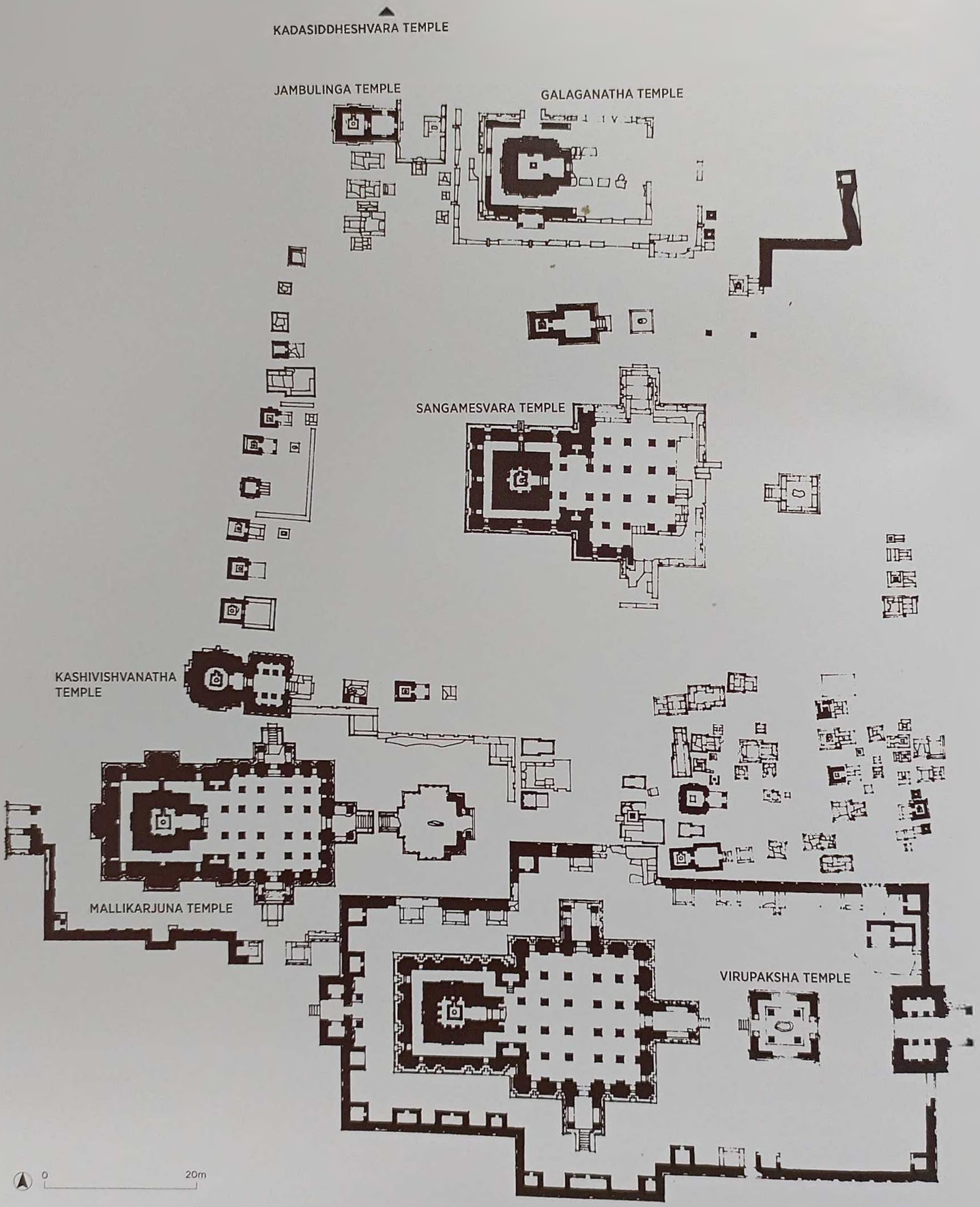
KADASIDDHESHVARA TEMPLE
JAMBULINGA TEMPLE
GALAGANATHA TEMPLE
SANGAMESVARA TEMPLE
KASHIVISHVANATHA TEMPLE
MALLIKARJUNA TEMPLE
VIRUPAKSHA TEMPLE
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PATTADAKAL

The group of temples on the left bank of the Malprabha at Pattadakal, approximately midway between Badami and Aihole, represents the climax of Early Chalukya architecture and art. Eight monuments stand in a modern landscaped compound, all facing east towards the river, which here takes a turn to the north before resuming its overall north-eastern course. Unlike Badami and Aihole, which were important towns in Early Chalukya times, Pattadakal never had a sizeable population; it remains a small, remote settlement today. That it may have functioned as a royal commemorative site in Early Chalukya times is suggested by Kirttivarma's inscription on a free-standing pillar set up in 754 in the middle of the site. This records that the Sangameshvara temple at Pattadakal was erected by his grandfather Vijayaditya, and originally named after him as Vijayeshvara, and that the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples were erected by two queens of his father Vikramaditya II in honour of their lord's victory over the Pallavas in Kanchipuram, and similarly named after their royal sponsors. (It is not known when these and the other temples at Pattadakal assumed their present-day labels.) Vijayaditya's monument survives only in an unfinished condition, probably because building work on it ceased after the death of its royal patron in 733. The twin projects of Vikramaditya's two queens were probably already completed by the time of Vijayaditya's pillar edict, some twenty years later. Significantly, these three temples are all built in the Dravida style, which here attains its climactic phase under Early Chalukya patronage. The profusion and outstanding quality of the carvings on the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna attest to the large numbers of specialist artists who must have been employed on both these projects.

No chronological data is available for the other temples at Pattadakal, all of which are built in the contrasting Nagara style, as is obvious from their *shikhara* towers. The Galaganatha appears to be an almost exact copy of the late 7th century Svarga Brahma temple at Alampur, perhaps erected by workmen specifically brought to Pattadakal for this purpose. If so, it is likely to be the earliest monument at Pattadakal, under construction by the beginning of the 8th century, though perhaps never completed. The nearby Kashivishvanatha, which embodies the final stage in the evolution of the Nagara idiom at Pattadakal, must be somewhat later; so, too, the more archaic, rudimentary Nagara style Kadasiddheshvara and Jambulinga temples. As for the Papanatha, this combines features derived from both the Dravida and Nagara traditions. Since the names of several of the artists engraved onto its walls are also found on the walls of the Virupaksha, it is likely that work on these two projects proceeded simultaneously. If so, the Papanatha should be assigned to the middle of the 8th century, towards the very end of the Early Chalukya era. While archaeologists have uncovered remains of brick plinths in front of the Sangameshvara temple, these vestiges did not seem to predate the Early Chalukya era.

The descriptions of the main group of monuments at Pattadakal follow an approximate north-south sequence, beginning with the Kadasiddheshvara, Jambulinga and Galaganatha temples, continuing with the Kashivishvanatha, and the great Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna. Each of these last two temples stands together with a Nandi pavilion within its own walled compound entered through gateways. The descriptions conclude with the Papanatha, overlooking the river about 250 metres to the south of the main group.

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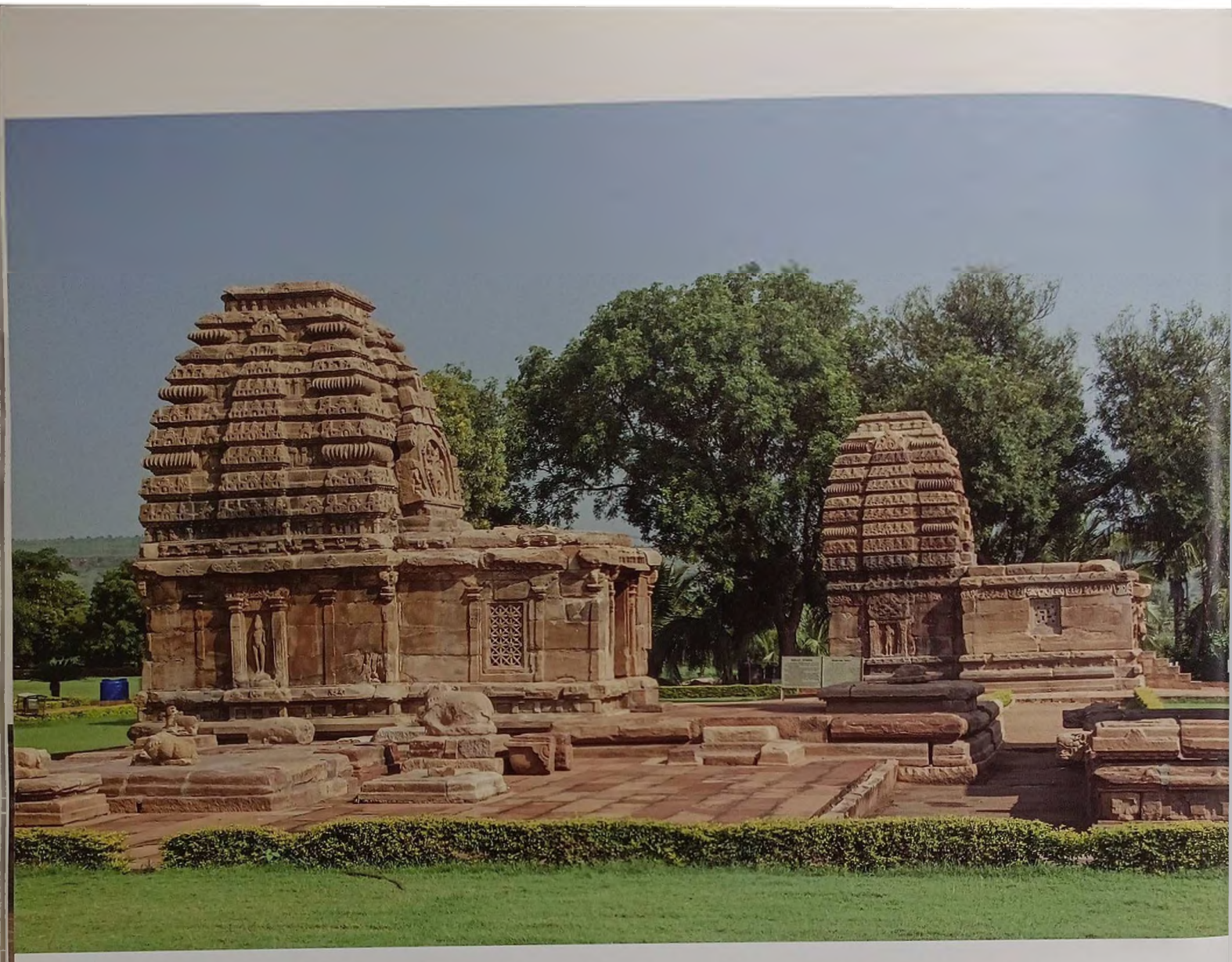
The main group of temples at Pattadakal.

Panorama of the main group of temples from the east.



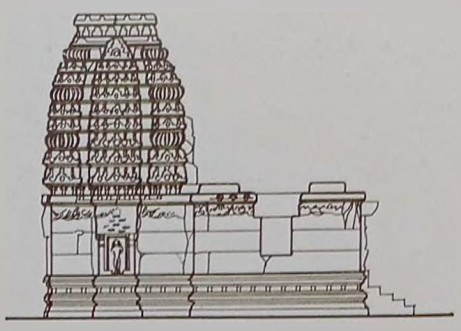
ABOVE
Jambulinga temple (left) and Kadasiddheshvara temple (right).

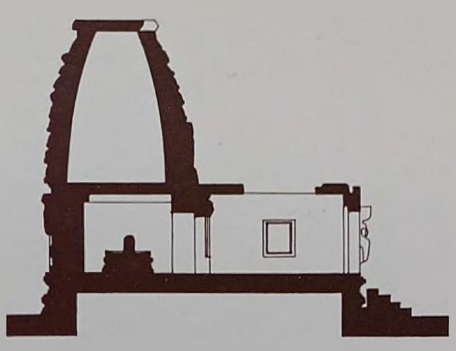
FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Kadasiddheshvara temple.

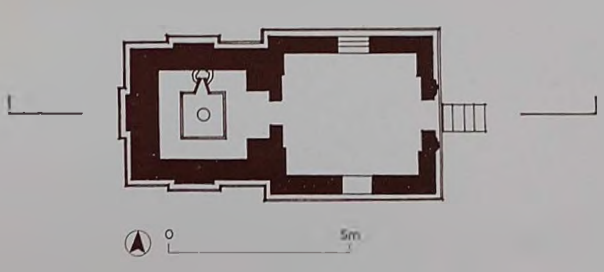
KADASIDDHESHVARA TEMPLE

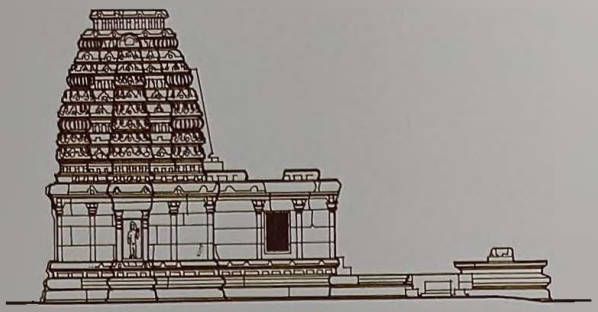
This small temple comprises of a square *linga* sanctuary and slightly rectangular *mandapa*. The temple has its outer walls raised on a basement with a part-octagonal course, replaced by a rounded course beneath the niches on three sides of the sanctuary. The niches are framed by pilasters carrying pediments composed of interlocking full and part-*gavaksha* motifs incorporating diminutive seated lions and flying figures. They accommodate worn icons of Lakulisha (south), Harihara (west) and Ardhanarishvara (north). The walls are terminated by a frieze of looped garlands carried by *ganas*, with flying figures above. The triple-faceted *shikhara* tower that rises has diminishing tiers of *kapotas* adorned with *gavakshas*, with *amalakas* set into the corners. A *gavaksha* panel framing a Nataraja icon (damaged) is set up against the tower's frontal (east) face; there is no finial.

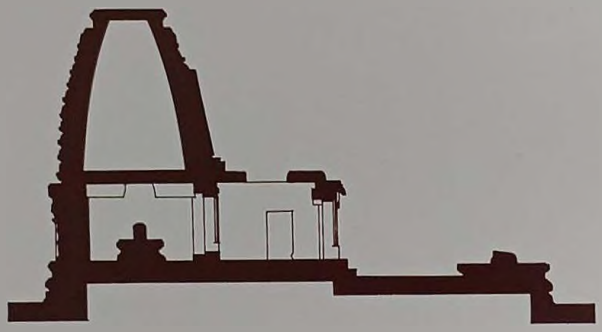
Windows were inserted into the side *mandapa* walls, but only that on the north, with a swastika design, survives (the other is a modern replacement). Guardians leaning on clubs (worn) frame the *mandapa* doorway (damaged). The sanctuary doorway has pilasters set in bands decorated with lotus patterns. The bands return over the lintel, where they are partly obscured by Shiva seated with Parvati, flanked by Vishnu and Brahma. River goddesses and companions (worn) are seen beneath at either side. A *linga* on a pedestal is set up within the sanctuary.

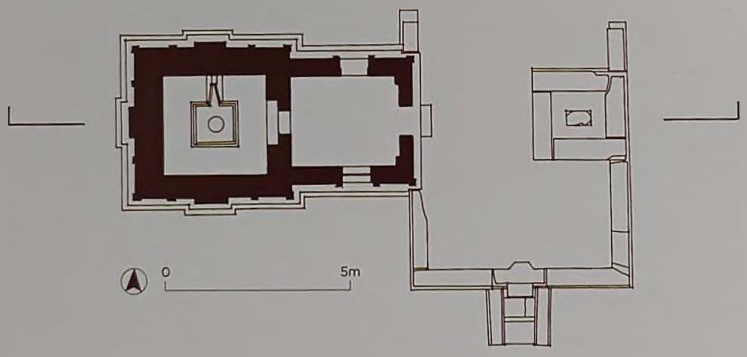












ABOVE
Plan, section and elevation of the Jambulinga temple.

FACING PAGE
The temple from the east.

JAMBULINGA TEMPLE

This stands a few metres south of Kadasiddheshvara, which it resembles in all essential respects. Among the minor variations are the slightly smaller *mandapa*, the lack of variation in the basement mouldings beneath the niches, the pilasters with rolled brackets marking the corners and intermediate points of the walls, and the *kapota* cornice on a *hamsa* frieze. Sculptures in the pilastered niches on the sanctuary walls (worn) depict Lakulisha bearing an axe (south), Harihara (west) and Vishnu (north). Pilasters flanking the south niche bear human torsos with fanciful foliate tails linked by a garland held up by a pair of diminutive figures; foliated *makaras* with tiny riders (damaged) can be made out over the north niche, and the same design may have surmounted the west niche (extremely worn).

The sanctuary tower is of the same type as the Kadasiddheshvara, but with a slightly more rounded profile. The frontal *gavaksha*, containing Nataraja accompanied by Parvati and Nandi, is complete. Again, only one of the original windows in the *mandapa* walls is preserved; this has diagonal mullions with intermediate flowers (south). The *mandapa* doorway has fluted pilasters set in recessed bands carrying a *kapota* on a *hamsa* frieze, but only the lower part of the entablature with miniature *linga*s is seen above. The pilasters framing the sanctuary doorway are set in foliate bands and carry a stunted *kapota*. A *linga* on a pedestal survives within the sanctuary.

The *mandapa* opens onto a dilapidated rectangular platform accommodating an eroded Nandi.

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5m

GALAGANATHA TEMPLE

Though surviving in an incomplete state, the original scheme of this temple is apparent. It comprises of a sanctuary with vestibule surrounded by a passageway with windowed porches on three sides. Almost nothing is preserved of the adjoining *mandapa*, except for foundation blocks of the peripheral walls and footing blocks for internal columns. All of these components are raised on a plinth with a recessed pilastered course capped with a *kapota*, into which animal-headed drainage spouts are inserted (partly reconstructed).

The outer passageway walls are raised on a basement with a central row of cubical blocks, the ends carved with miniature figures, animals, birds and foliate motifs, capped with a *kapota* and foliate frieze. The plain walls carry the bevelled ends of the sloping slabs that roof the passageway within. This scheme is interrupted in the middle of the south side by a porch extension, raised on a basement that continues that of the walls at either side. The porch employs a pair of columns with circular shafts and cubical vase-and-foliage bases and capitals. Brackets carved with monster masks carry the beams and roof slabs with *kapota* ends above. The rear wall of the porch has a sculpted panel showing Shiva energetically spearing Andhaka. The panel is flanked by perforated stone windows with criss-cross mullions framed by columns, also with vase-and-foliage capitals, and bands of foliate decoration.

In contrast to its dilapidated lower walls, the *shikhara* tower over the temple's sanctuary preserves most of its crisply carved detail. On each of its faces the tower has three projecting facets adorned with diminishing tiers of *kapotas*; these frame recesses filled with superimposed pilastered 'storeys'. *Kapotas* on the tower's central facets are adorned with *gavakshas* containing heads flanked by half-*gavakshas*. This scheme is further elaborated on the lowest two courses of the central facets, where part-trefoil *gavakshas* frame pairs of pilasters and additional miniature *gavakshas*. The tower's outer facets have flattish *kapotas*, decorated with half- and full *gavakshas* in pyramidal formation, regularly interrupted by flat, squarish *amalakas*. The entire composition is crowned with a spherical *amalaka* on a cylindrical base and a pot finial. Of the projection on the tower's frontal (east) face, only several blocks flanking a gap can now be seen. It is not clear if this projection was left unfinished, or if it was dismantled.

The sanctuary walls within the passageway are raised on a basement with a central vase-like, curved moulding, replaced by a row of blocks at the central niche projections on three sides, topped by a *kapota*. The niches are flanked by pilasters with vase-and-foliage motifs at the bases and capitals, within which are foliate bands. No carved panels are preserved within the shallow recesses. Wall projections at either side lack recesses, and were evidently not intended to receive carvings. Yet they are headed by prominent pyramidal pediments composed of full and half-*gavakshas*, occasionally flanked by cut-out lions. The walls are terminated by a *kapota* cornice.

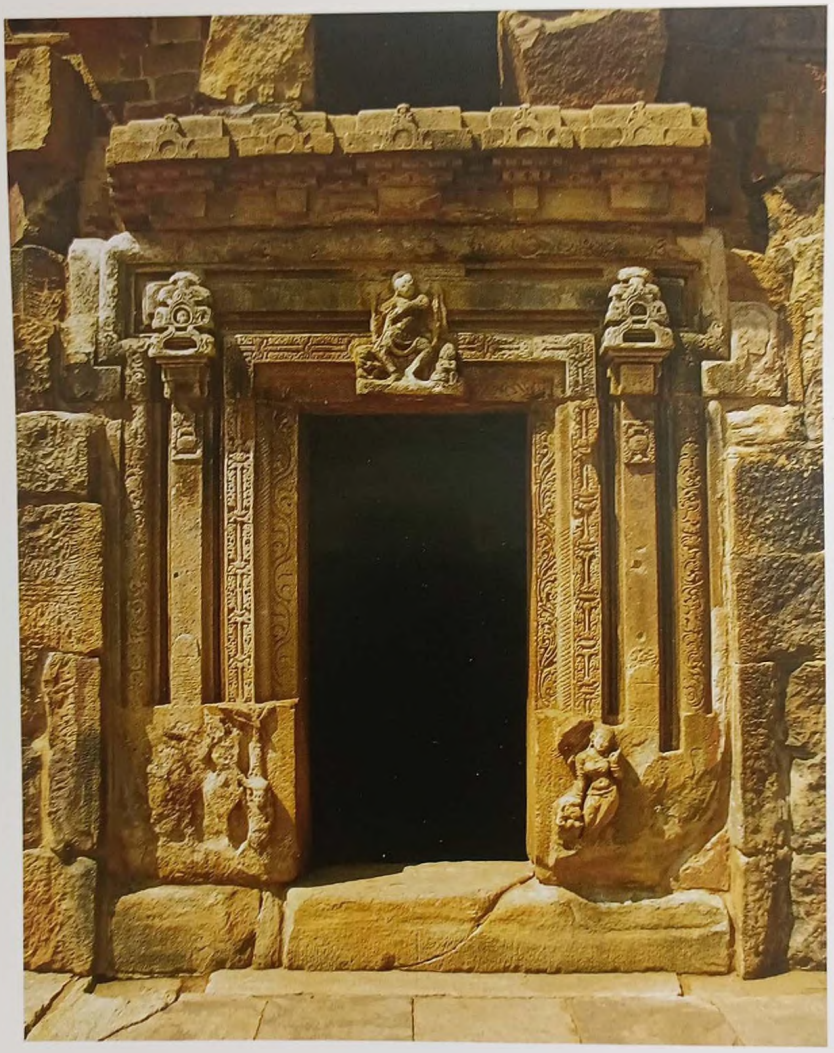
The sanctuary doorway is framed by pilasters with tiny vase-and-foliage capitals set in bands of foliate ornament, with panels showing maidens holding parasols (probably river goddesses) beneath at either side. The bands return over the lintel, where they are interrupted by an icon of Nataraja in the middle, flanked by *gavaksha* compositions. Engaged columns dividing the vestibule from the *linga* chamber have brackets with wavy petalled designs on the sides and lotuses on the undersides. A polished green granite *linga* with a cylindrical top within the sanctuary lacks any pedestal.

ABOVE
Shiva spearing Andhaka; wall panel in the south porch of the Galaganatha temple.

FACING PAGE
Section and elevation of the Galaganatha temple.

ABOVE
The Galaganatha temple from the south-east.

FACING PAGE
A close-up of the tower, displaying the intricate designs.



RIGHT
Sanctuary doorway of the Galaganatha temple.

FACING PAGE
Passageway surrounding the sanctuary.

KASHIVISHVANATHA TEMPLE

The foundation course of this temple is located less than 1 metre away from that of the Mallikarjuna's north porch, immediately to the south, and at a slightly lower level and noticeable angle to its larger, and presumably later, neighbour. The Kashivishvanatha comprises a *linga* sanctuary approached through a narrow vestibule, which opens into a transverse, rectangular *mandapa* (longer in the north-south direction).

The temple's outer walls are raised on a high basement, with a central, vase-like, curved course decorated with creeper ornament, and a similarly decorated topmost band with occasional animals. The basement is divided into projections that coincide with the wall niches above. Those on the east face, either side of the *mandapa* doorway, have double pairs of secondary pilasters carrying *kapotas* and *kuta-shala-kuta* pediments. The other niches all have single pairs of secondary pilasters headed by pyramidal pediments with complex designs formed from interlocking part-*gavaksha* motifs. The niches are shallow and empty except for a Trivikrama icon (damaged) on the east wall. Damaged Ardhanarishvara and Lakulisha icons are carved onto the wall surfaces between the niches on the north *mandapa* wall. The walls throughout are topped by a frieze of garlands issuing from open-mouthed *makaras* containing *ganas* and flying couples. The *mandapa* doorway is surrounded by bands with diverse lotus patterns and scrollwork; Garuda appears on the lintel, and river goddesses beneath at either side, though these are somewhat worn.

The temple is dominated by a *shikhara* tower with five projecting bands on each face, continuing the projections of the walls beneath, giving the exterior a conspicuous vertical thrust. The central three bands of the tower are covered with a mesh formed from interlocking *gavaksha* motifs; the side bands present diminishing sequences of *kapotas*, some ornamented with triangular *gavaksha* arrangements, alternating with flattish *amalakas*. Additional *gavaksha* designs adorn the projections with triangular tops at the base of the central projections. The tower is completed with a recessed, pilastered course, but the capping *amalaka* finial is missing. The frontal *gavaksha* arch contains an eight-armed Nataraja accompanied by Parvati (both figures defaced). The arch is raised on a quartet of *gavaksha* mesh projections that extend onto the sides, beneath its vaulted roof.

The *mandapa* interior has four free-standing columns. These display sixteen-sided fluted shafts interrupted by maidens (worn) below, and cubical blocks carved with diverse topics above: Shiva as Tripurantaka, the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, Brahma, and Shiva spearing Andhaka (south-east column); Shiva and Parvati, Shiva appearing out of the *linga*, seated Shiva, and Ardhanarishvara (south-west column); the birth of Krishna, Krishna killing demons, and Krishna subduing Kaliya (north-east column), and Ravana disturbing Shiva and Parvati on Kailasa, Nataraja, Shiva dancing in the elephant skin, and Shiva with Nandi and Bhringi (north-west column). Three columns have ornate pot-and-foliage capitals, while a fourth column employs

an *amalaka*-type capital. Brackets have fluted ends, two with additional elephant torsos. The entablature above has double *kapotas* framing a row of pilasters and a frieze of *ganas* carrying garlands. Lions project from the lower *kapota* at the western end. The underside of the central transverse beam is carved with a *linga* on a pedestal between flying celestials with foliate bodies. The entablatures and intermediate lion brackets carry raised and horizontal roof slabs over two bays. The single ceiling composition here has Shiva and Parvati in the middle, surrounded by four *lokapalas* and an outer band of *ganas* (worn). Sloping slabs roof the bays on three sides.

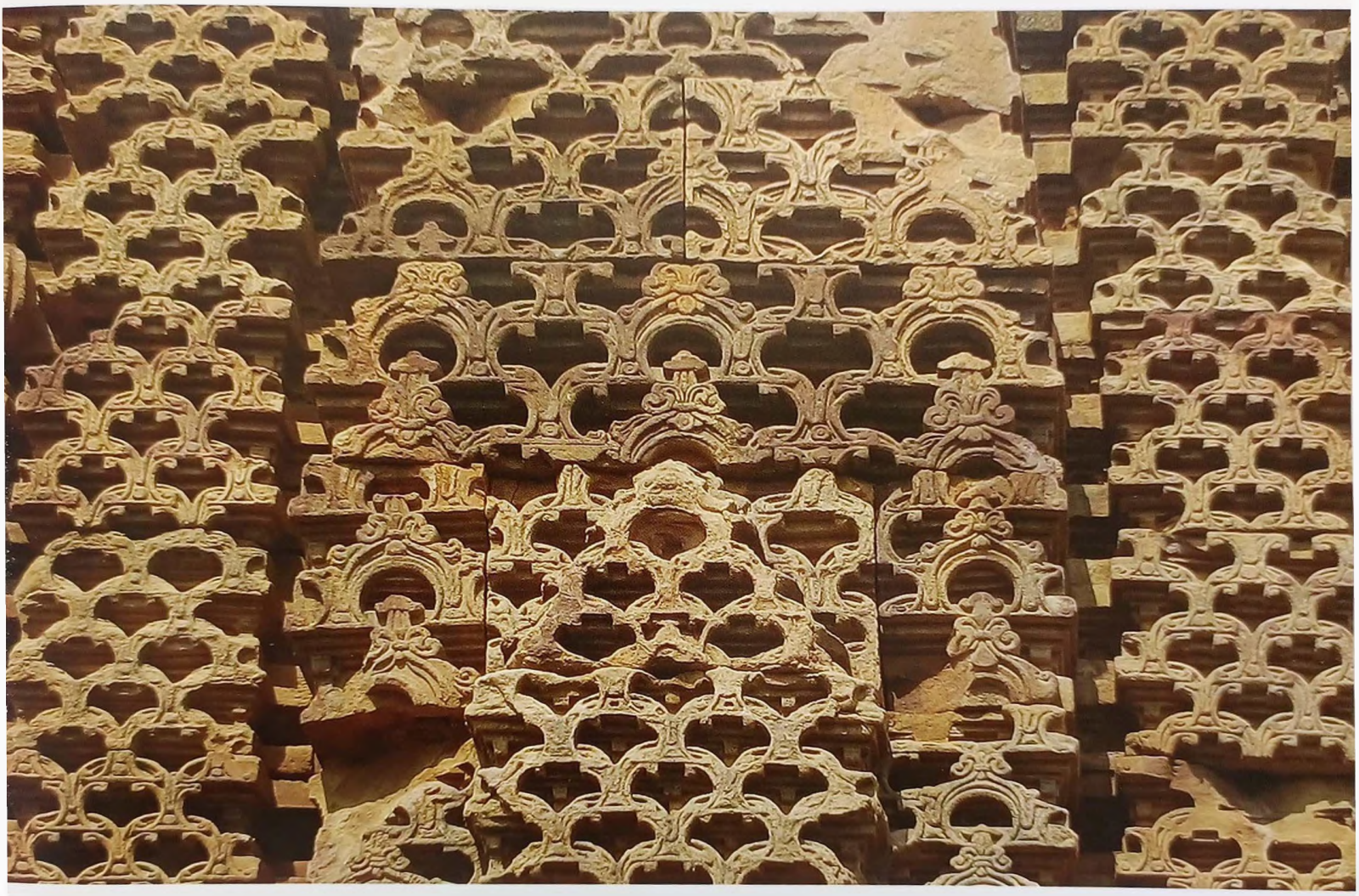
Four of the half-columns engaged against the *mandapa* walls have *yalis* at the base, shallow monster masks on the brackets, and garlands conveyed by *ganas* above. Four-armed guardians are carved onto the engaged columns on either side of the vestibule doorway. This is surrounded by miniature figures and bands of lotus ornament. Flying Garuda clutching serpents is seen on the lintel. Beneath at either side are river goddesses with fluttering scarves, accompanied by parasol-bearing maidens, and guardians. Engaged columns separate the vestibule from the sanctuary. Their shafts have bands of foliate, with *gavaksha* motifs above, and pot-and-foliage motifs beneath. Double square capitals carry fluted brackets. Within the sanctuary is a pedestal and green granite *linga*, above which a worn lotus ceiling can be made out.

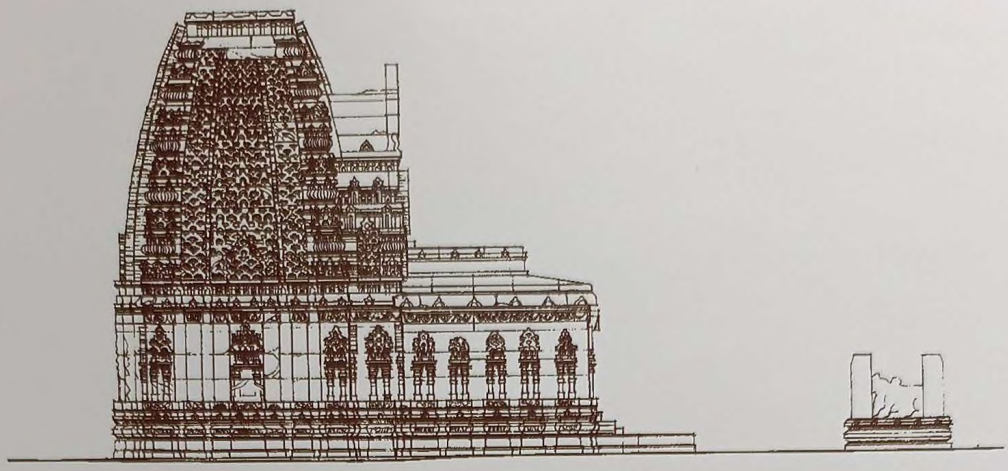
In front of the *mandapa* is a small square plinth with the stumps of two corner columns, on which is placed a Nandi image.

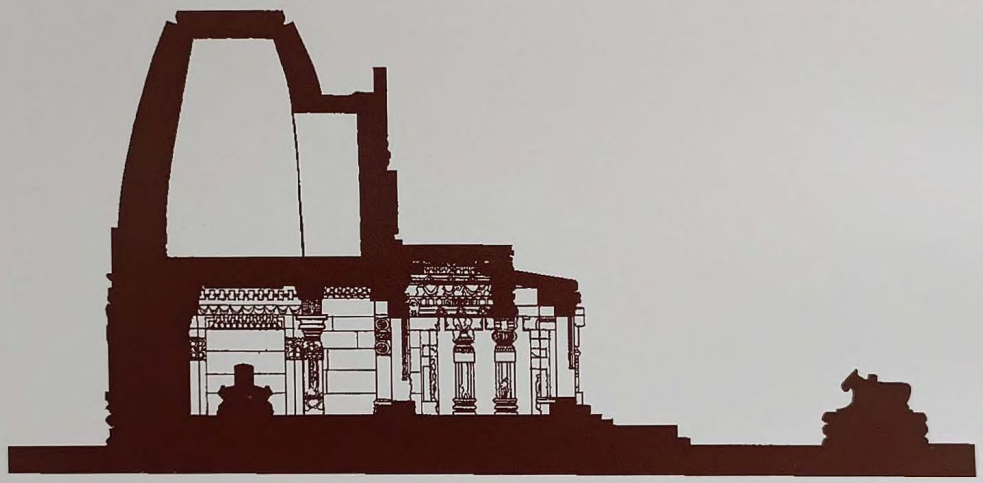
The Kashivishvanatha temple from the south-west.

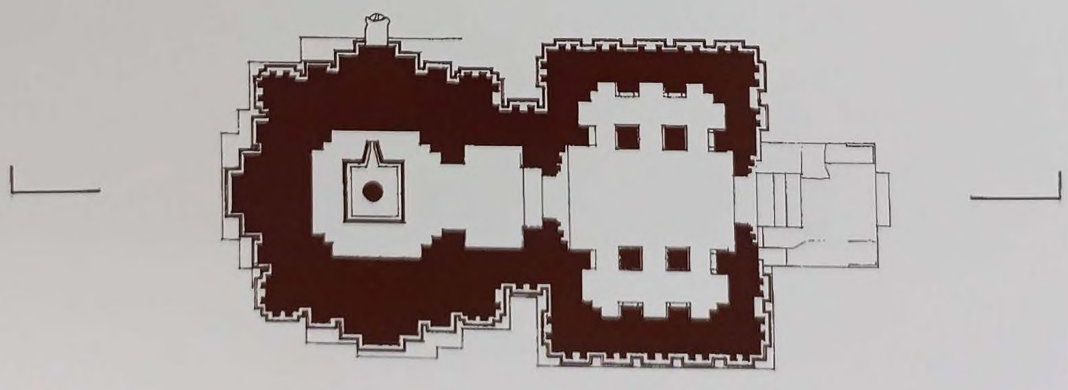
ABOVE
South wall of the Kashivishvanatha temple.

FACING PAGE
Detail of the tower showing the mesh of interlocking *gavakshas*.









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RIGHT
Interior of the temple *mandapa*.

FACING PAGE
Plan, section and elevation of the Kashivishvanatha temple.

SANGAMESHVARA TEMPLE

The expanded scale and clarity of design of Vijayaditya's monument signal the beginning of the final phase of Dravida architecture under Early Chalukya patronage. Left unfinished during its patron's death, an attempt was made to complete this monument during the Rashtrakuta period.

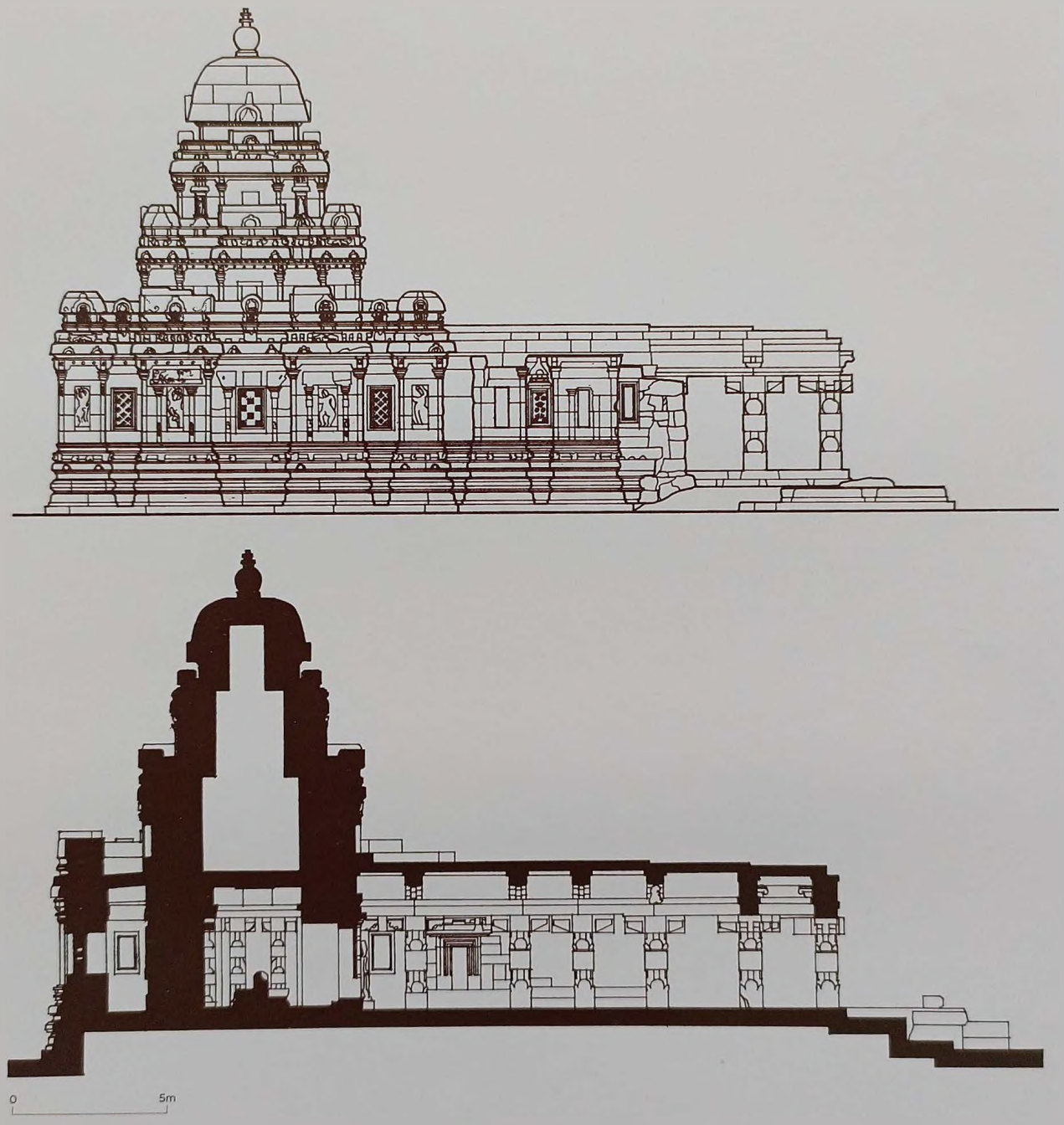
The temple consists of a *linga* sanctuary surrounded on three sides by a broad passageway opening into a five-aisled *mandapa*, preserved fully on the west only. Four columns create a transition between the *mandapa* and sanctuary doorway, with small rectangular sub-shrines to the north and south. The *mandapa* was intended to be entered through porch extensions on three sides, but only the foundations of the north and south porches were laid out. (The continuous plinth on the east, with no indication of any porch, is an inaccurate modern restoration.) A dilapidated plinth with a damaged Nandi is seen to the east.

The passageway walls are raised on a basement with part-octagonal moulding, *kapota* with *kudus*, and a frieze of animals. These mouldings continue onto the west *mandapa* walls. On each of the three sides the passageway walls have four pilastered projections framing three recesses. The two inner wider projections and the central wider recess have pairs of secondary shorter pilasters framing sculptures (on the projections) and perforated windows (central recesses), each topped with pediments (unfinished). The walls are terminated by a *kapota* cornice on a row of *ganas*, above which are an animal frieze and parapet with corner *kutas* framing two intermediate *shalas*. The tower above rises in two storeys, without any frontal (east) projection. The first (lower) storey has pilastered walls with triple projections with sculpture niches on each face, topped with a *kapota* on *hamsas*, animal frieze and *kuta-shala-kuta* parapet. The second (upper) storey has a reduced pilastered wall with only narrow side projections, topped by a *kapota* on *hamsas* and a single central *shala*. The tower is dominated by the capping *kuta* roof, with axial *kudus* and *kalasha* finial.

Sculptures on Sangameshvara's passageway walls are only blocked out, or outlined in a preliminary fashion. They show various aspects of Shiva: spearing Andhaka, Nataraja, and dancing in the skin of the slain elephant demon (south); together with Nandi, and accompanied by Bhringi (west), and suppressing a dwarf with one foot. Harihara and Varaha appear on the north. Windows set into the intervening recesses exhibit simple designs with square and diagonal perforations, and, in one instance, a circle with bars. A single window in the west *mandapa* walls (south side) has foliate motifs incorporating peacocks, and may have been removed from the nearby Virupaksha temple. Pediments over the sculpture niches and the windows are unfinished, with the exception of one example on the south wall with fanciful scrollwork, and one on the west wall with a pair of peacocks. Sculptures on the first storey of the tower depict Lakulisha, Nataraja and two Vishnu icons.

The sanctuary doorway has undecorated (probably incomplete) pilasters carrying a *kapota* and entablature. Maidens (maybe river goddesses) with parasol-bearing attendants and other figures are seen beneath (worn); guardians leaning on clubs are sculpted onto the engaged columns at either side. A broken, green granite *linga* on a pedestal is seen within the sanctuary. The doorways to the side sub-shrines, headed by *shalas*, are unfinished. Two of the columns between the sub-shrines have bands and part-circles; the brackets have rolled ends. The other columns, beams and horizontal ceiling slabs in the *mandapa* are all Rashtrakuta additions. Sculptures on the outer sanctuary walls, within the passageway, are engraved in preliminary outline only.

FACING PAGE
Section and elevation of the Sangameshvara temple.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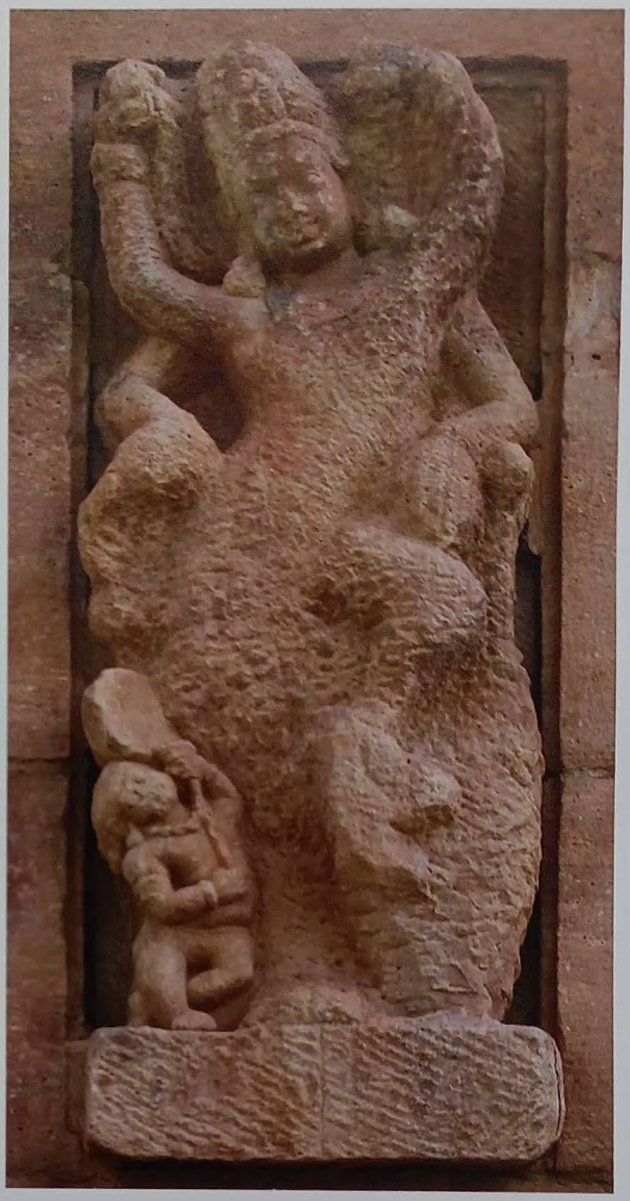
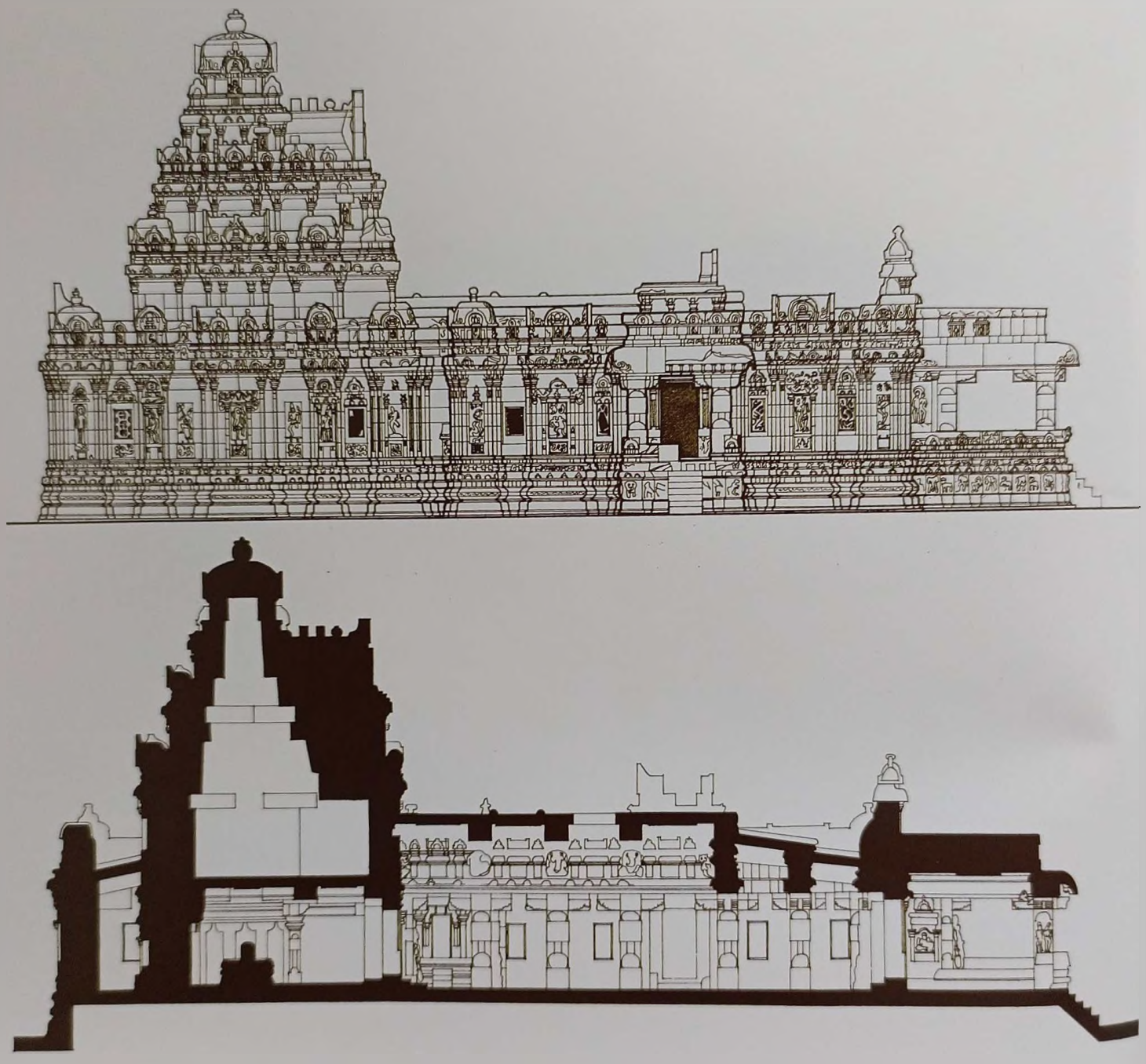


ABOVE AND FACING PAGE
Aspects of Shiva; unfinished wall panels on the Sangameshvara temple.



VIRUPAKSHA TEMPLE

The largest of the Pattadakal temples and the most elaborately planned and artistically embellished monument of the Early Chalukya period, the Virupaksha stands at the southern perimeter of the site's landscaped compound. The temple is associated with Lokamahadevi, senior queen of Vikramaditya II, and was originally named after her as Lokeshvara. That the temple must have been considered the outstanding achievement of the era is borne out by two inscriptions on the eastern gateway to the complex. These give the names of the principal architects: Tribhuvan and Sarvasiddhi Acharyas, Master of the Three Worlds and Master of the Abode of Good Qualities. Many of the sculptors involved in the project have their names engraved beneath the carved panels that they worked on.

The Virupaksha temple is the focus of a symmetrically planned complex, with a stone paved compound bounded by walls and sub-shrines, entered through gateways on the east and west. The compound walls are extended outwards in the middle of the north and south to accommodate the temple's porch projections on these sides. A Nandi pavilion stands freely within the compound, between the temple and the eastern gateway.

The temple consists of a *linga* sanctuary surrounded by a passageway on three sides, lit by windows on three sides and preceded by a vestibule. This opens into a square *mandapa* with sixteen free-standing columns creating five aisles running in both directions, the central aisles being slightly wider. Additional columns create a transitional space between the *mandapa* and the vestibule, which is flanked by small sub-shrines. The *mandapa* is entered from the north, east and south through columned porches, each flanked by wall extensions and accessed by a flight of steps.

The outer walls of the temple are raised on a basement with a part-octagonal moulding with a creeper motif, *kapota* with decorated *kudus* and a frieze of animals. The *mandapa* walls on either side of the porches have two projections each framed by double pairs of pilasters, containing sculpture niches. The inner projections are slightly wider, so as to accommodate secondary pairs of pilasters carrying elaborate pediments. The passageway walls employ five projections on each of the three sides. Those in the middle, which are the widest, have double pairs of framing pilasters, as well as pairs of secondary pilasters with pediments; those at the intermediate points are the narrowest, and have only single pairs of framing pilasters, but also with secondary pilasters carrying *kapotas* and *kudus*; the end projections have double pairs of pilasters but no secondary pilasters. Sculptures adorn each of the projections, as well as the two inner recesses; perforated windows are set in the two outer recesses. The full-height pilasters defining the projections carry *kapota* eaves on *hamsas*, a frieze of animals, and a parapet with corner *kutas*, central *shalas* and intermediate *kudus*.

The triple-storeyed tower over the sanctuary has a prominent frontal (east) projection. The first and second storeys have diminishing sequences of triple pilastered projections with eaves and *kuta-shala-kuta* parapets, extended east by one bay. The third (topmost) storey has central projections only, flanked by tiny niches, with eaves and corner *kutas*. This is surmounted by a *kuta* roof with ornate *kudus* framing miniature *kuta*-topped temple towers, corner foliate decoration, and a smooth, *kalasha* finial. The frontal projection is conceived as an enlarged *gavaksha* framing a *kuta*-topped temple tower. *Kalasha* finials are placed on the ridge behind.

The sculptures on the outer walls are among the greatest masterpieces of Early Chalukya plastic art. At the outset it is worth noting the matching panels on the *mandapa* walls on either side of the east porch. To the right (north) is six-armed Trivikrama, his leg kicked straight up almost vertically, the foot acrobatically touching his outstretched hand pointing to heaven. *Makaras* with riders and luxuriant tails are carved in shallow relief above. The windows here employ designs based on fanciful foliage and entwined knots.

FACING PAGE
Section and elevation of the Virupaksha temple.

FOLLOWING PAGES
The Virupaksha temple from the north-east, with Kirttivarma's pillar in front.

To the left (south), Shiva emerges from a *linga* fringed with flames, with his axe and trident floating above. The *linga* is flanked by diminutive boar and goose, representing Vishnu and Brahma. Peacocks with extravagantly foliated tails are seen above, together with Lakshmi flanked by elephants with upraised trunks, and flying figures. The windows here have swathes of foliage, and swastikas set between lotuses. The east porch between these panels and windows has its side wall extensions carved with Ardhanarishvara and dwarf (north), and an embracing couple beneath a tree (south).

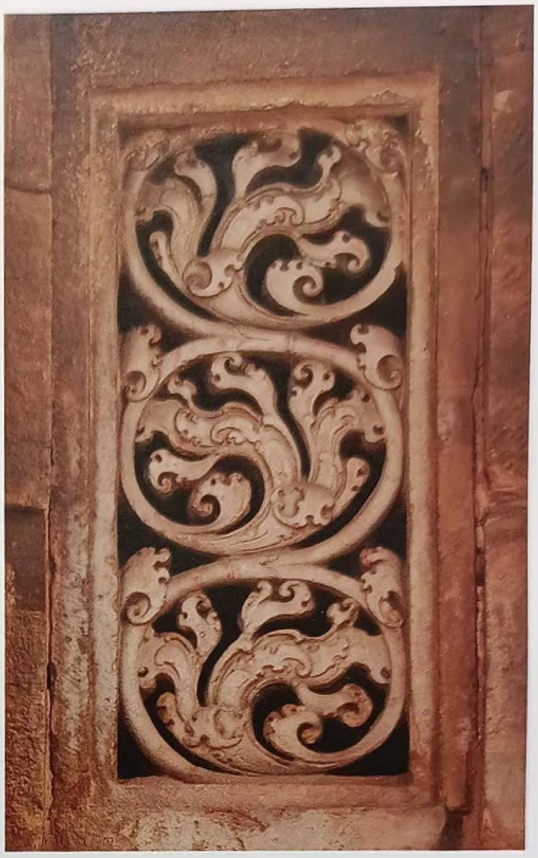
Proceeding in a clockwise direction, the next sculpture to be seen is Shiva standing on a deformed dwarf (south end of the east *mandapa* walls). The eight-armed god holds snakes, an axe, trident, drum and staff. He is accompanied by a grotesque dwarf with a face on its stomach. Ascetics, acrobats and couples are seen above. The panels on the south *mandapa* walls begin with a dancing Shiva, one leg raised high, the other crushing a dwarf, holding a drum and staff with a tiny Nandi. The flowing drapery and the arm flung across the body express the motion of the dance, paralleled in the flying figures above. Then comes Shiva with Parvati, the couple depicted in affectionate embrace. Lakshmi and elephants in fantasy foliation are seen above. Further vegetal designs are displayed in the exquisitely cut windows at either side. Panels on the wall extensions of the south porch show Shiva and Parvati on Mount Kailasa (east), and Narasimha disembowelling his victim (west).

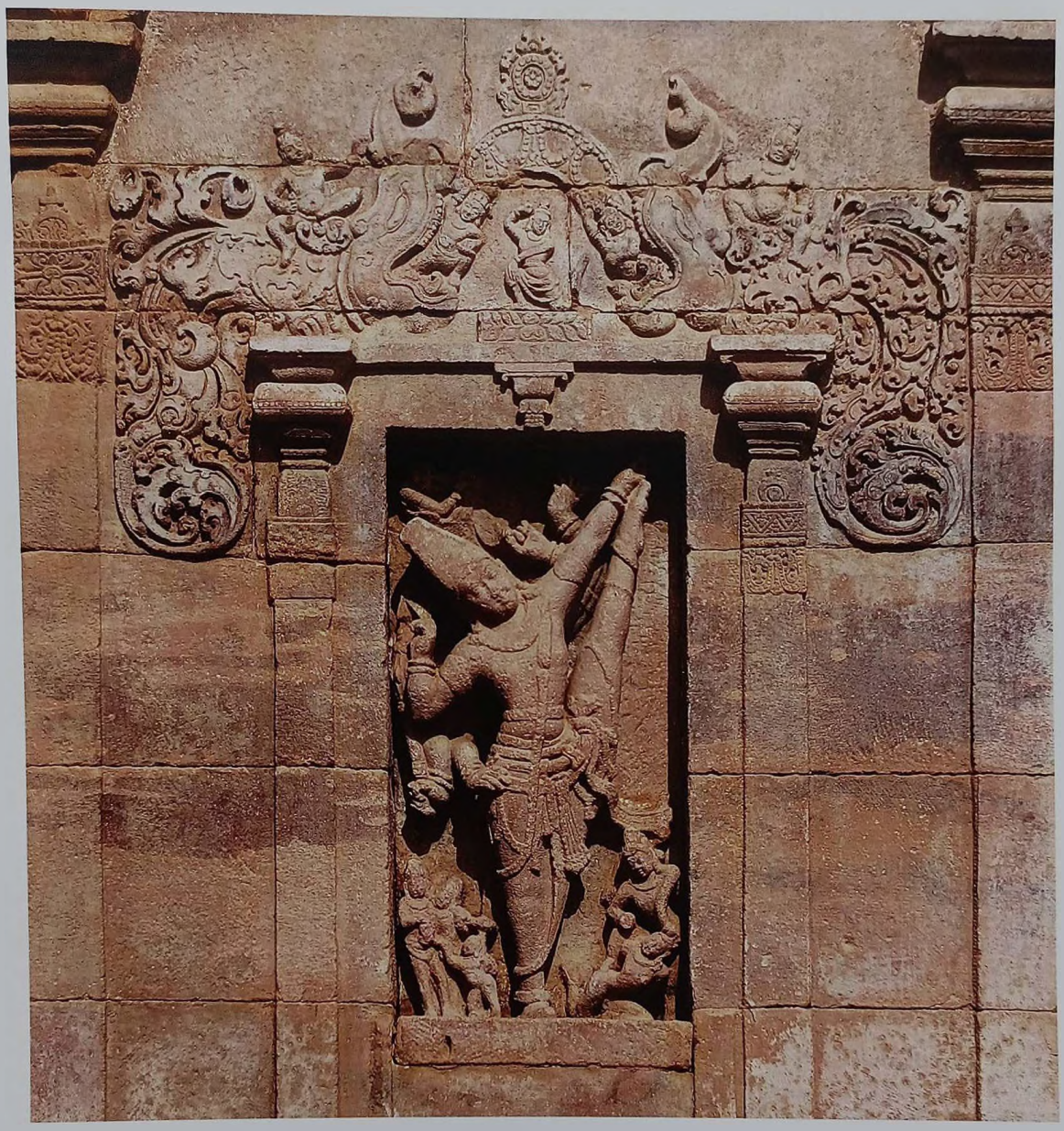
The following three panels, extending up to and around the south-western corner of the *mandapa*, illustrate *Ramayana* episodes, accompanied by identifying labels. (The narrative proceeds in an anticlockwise sequence, but the descriptions here follow a clockwise direction.) They show Vali and Sugriva, their monkey heads now lost, engaged in violent combat, the leg of one wrapped around that of the other. Then comes Ravana, holding up a shield, attacked from behind by Jatayu (west end of the south *mandapa* walls). The demon has his head tilted dramatically backwards as he is intercepted by the vulture with angrily fanned wings. A small horse-drawn aerial chariot bearing Sita being abducted by Ravana can be made out above. Finally, Rama shoots a bow at the golden deer, with Sita and Lakshmana looking on (west face of the *mandapa* walls). Above, Lakshmana rejects the advances of Shurpanakha.

Panels on the passageway walls are mostly devoted to Shiva, with inventive foliate panels beneath. They include icons of Bhikshatana, Bhairava with matted hair, Shiva energetically spearing Andhaka, curly headed Lakulisha holding a club, and Harihara. The central projection on the north passageway walls has a formally posed eight-armed image of Vishnu armed with disc, conch, sword, shield, bow and arrow, accompanied by two dwarfs (see page 26). That this may be a replacement image is suggested by Shiva and Parvati between exquisitely modelled *makaras* with open jaws, riders and cascading tails on the walls above, and diminutive Mahishasuramardini beneath. A modest image of Varaha occupies the adjacent recess.

The sculptures on the north *mandapa* walls begin with an icon of Shiva holding a drum and staff with a fluttering banner, leaning comfortably against Nandi (north-west corner). This is followed by Harihara, with a trident and conch, and *chakra* seemingly floating above. A peacock with a fantastic tail is seen behind. Ardhanarishvara comes next, the male-female personality indicated by the trident and mirror held in the rear two hands. A window with a quartet of petals is seen to the left. The side wall extensions of the north porch have reliefs of Ravana beneath a scene of *linga* worship (west), and Shiva seated above a pair of sages (east). Panels on the remaining north *mandapa* walls include Nataraja, the god dancing on a prostrate dwarf, set between windows with swathes of luxuriant foliation and foliated peacocks. The series on this face concludes with Shiva and Parvati, the god stepping up on Nandi, the goddess gazing affectionately towards her lord.

FACING PAGE
Perforated stone windows on the Virupaksha temple.





Wall panels on the Virupaksha temple

ABOVE
Vishnu as Trivikrama.

FACING PAGE
Shiva appearing out of the *linga*.

Wall panels on the Virupaksha temple

LEFT
Shiva leaning against Nandi.

FACING PAGE
Dancing Shiva (left), and standing eight-armed Shiva (right).

Wall panels on the Virupaksha temple

LEFT
Shiva with Parvati; Shiva as Harihara (extreme left).

FACING PAGE
Shiva as Bhairava in the central panel, with Varaha on the right.

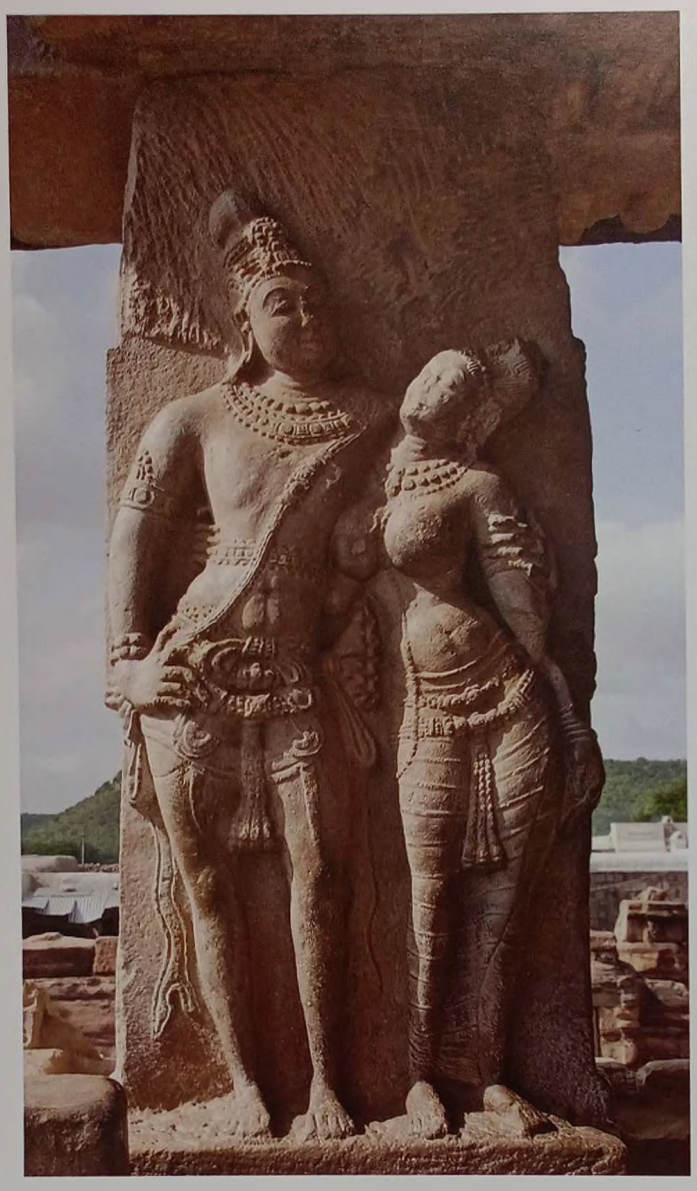
Porch projections on three sides of the Virupaksha temple are raised on basement mouldings with friezes of leaping lions and elephant torsos (mostly worn), capped with a *kapota* and animal frieze. Balcony seating above is treated as a parapet, with lines of *kutas* and *shalas* with intermediate *panjaras*. Porch columns with bands and part-circles and brackets with fluted sides carry beams sheltered by rounded eaves, the undersides with cut-out, timber-like ribs. Parapet courses above incorporate enlarged *shalas* placed on the roof at the rear, in line with the parapet over the *mandapa* walls.

The columns of the east porch have inscriptions recording various donations. One by queen Lokamahadevi confirms earlier contracts with the temple's musicians. The frontal columns are carved with courtly couples with elaborate headdresses, while those engaged into the walls at the rear have guardians leaning heavily on fluted clubs. They are finely dressed in flowing drapery and jewellery, with curly hair protruding from beneath their crowns. Side wall extensions at the rear of the porch are treated as shallow niches accommodating pot-bellied *nidhis* holding a conch or lotus, seated on lion thrones. Both figures are framed by 'showers' of coins, indicating their role as protectors of the underground treasure. The east *mandapa* doorway is framed by fluted circular pilasters supporting a *kapota*, with niches above headed by *kutas* and *shalas*, crowded with celestials. The porch ceiling shows two-armed Surya riding in a chariot pulled by seven leaping horses directed by diminutive Aruna, with archers aiming their bows at either side. *Makara* heads spewing flying couples fill the surrounding clouds, with celestial musicians and dancers all around.

The frontal columns of the Virupaksha's south porch are enlivened with dynamic compositions. The left-hand column shows Ravana shaking Kailasa. The multi-headed demon has twenty arms with pincer-like hands holding rocks; one foot sinks forcefully into the ground. The panel opposite on the right-hand column portrays a violent fight between two unidentified men, their legs interlocked. Almost human-sized guardians are carved onto the engaged columns at the rear of the south porch. The figures are cut out virtually in three dimensions. The *dvarapala* on the left has his legs crossed, with both arms grasping a snake-encircled club. The snake rises up before the guardian's face, shown with an angry expression, with furled brows and roaring mouth. An engraving over the head gives the name of the artist as Baladeva. (The same artist's name appears on the Papanatha temple.) Niches on the side wall extensions are occupied by flying Shiva, one leg kicked up behind (right), and Narasimha grappling with his human victim who recoils in terror (left). Both figures are set in pilastered niches headed by *shalas*. The doorway is unfinished. Brahma with sages surrounded by a ring of dwarfs (damaged) is carved onto the ceiling.

The frontal columns of Virupaksha's north porch are embellished with vivid carvings of Vishnu riding on Garuda rescuing Gajendra, who is shown trapped in a lotus pond (left-hand column), and four-armed Vishnu with a sage (right-hand column). The side faces of these columns show a female musician (instrument damaged) with a courtly admirer (left), and a gracious couple beneath a mango tree (right). Guardians on the engaged columns at the rear of the north porch are notable for their intricately worked jewellery and clearly delineated facial expressions, with bulging eyes and furled brows. The pilastered niche topped by a *shala* on the left-hand wall extension accommodates Nataraja, the eight arms variously disposed. The god tramples a dwarf, shown in a writhing, obscene posture. The niche opposite is empty. The doorway is unfinished, but flying Garuda appears on the lintel. The ceiling has Shiva and another four-armed deity seated on thrones in the company of devotees.

FACING PAGE
Surya riding in the chariot through the clouds; ceiling panel in the east porch of the Virupaksha temple.



Column sculptures in the Virupaksha temple porches

ABOVE
Courtly couples in the east porch.

FACING PAGE LEFT
Ravana disturbing Shiva and Parvati; south porch.

FACING PAGE RIGHT
Vishnu on Garuda rescuing the elephant Gajendra; north porch.

Wall panels in the Virupaksha temple porches

LEFT
Narasimha grapples with Hiranyakashipu; south porch.

FACING PAGE
Shiva dances on the dwarf; north porch.

The columns defining the Virupaksha temple's interior aisles have raised cubical blocks with part-circles above and below, linked by vertical bands. The blocks on the free-standing columns are all filled with relief depictions of narratives, legendary scenes and foliate designs. *Ramayana* episodes include Lakshmana cutting off the nose of Shurpanakha, who then complains to Ravana, and finally joins the demons in battle with Rama and Lakshmana. The story of the golden deer is followed by the abduction of Sita by Ravana in his aerial chariot, the attempt to intercept Ravana by Jatayu, and Rama meeting the dying vulture. Rama's encounter with the monkeys is reduced to the fight between Sugriva and Vali, and Hanuman leaping across the monster-infested ocean, sitting high on his coiled tail before Ravana, and then discovering Sita guarded in Ravana's palace garden.

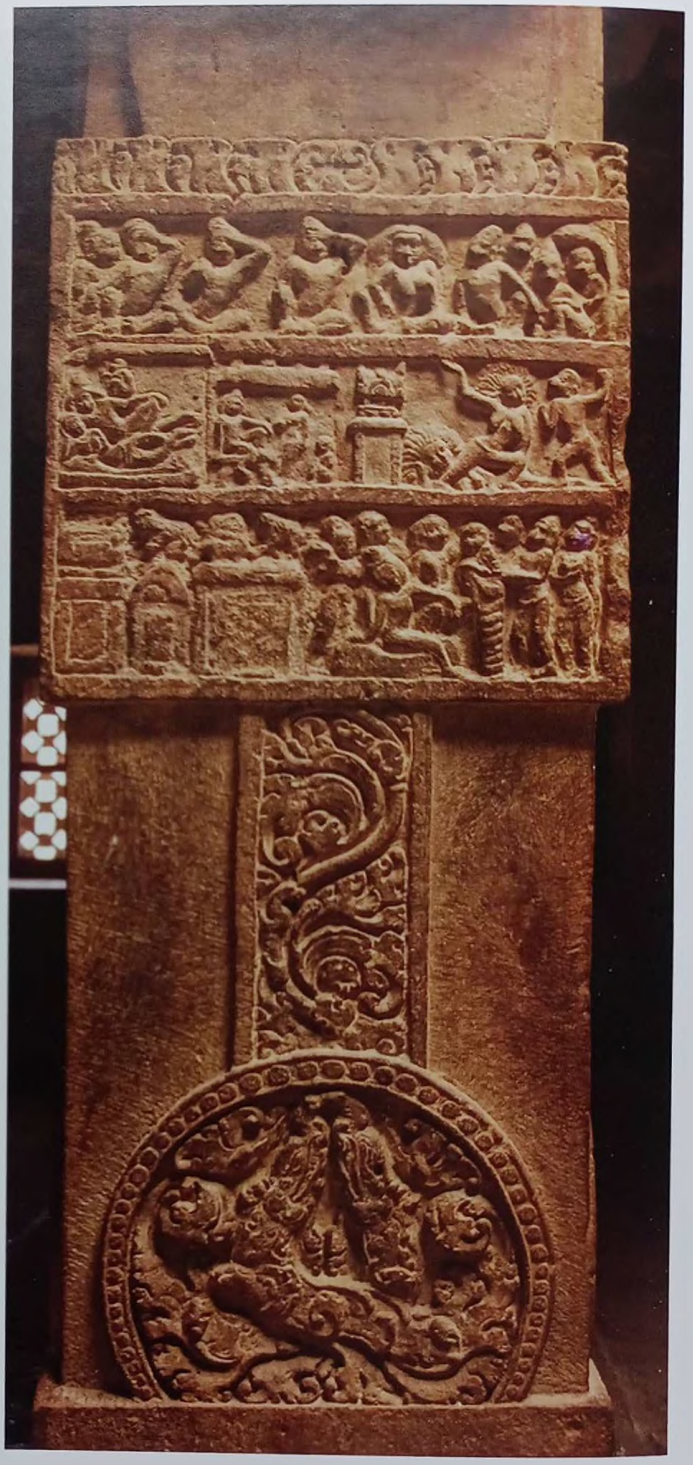
The *Mahabharata* is represented by scenes of a council of war, the death of Bhishma, with the great Pandava dying on a bed of arrows surrounded by mourning soldiers, and Bhima and Duryodhana fighting. The narrative concludes with the climactic battle between Arjuna and Karna, the protagonists riding in war chariots drawn by leaping horses. The Kiratarjuniya story begins with Arjuna and Shiva as a hunter shooting arrows at the same boar, the fight between Arjuna and Shiva, the combatants showering arrows at each other, and Arjuna overpowering Shiva, compelling the god to grant him the magic axe. Finally Arjuna shows Shiva's weapon to Duryodhana and his brothers. Krishna scenes also appear here, especially the god's childhood exploits such as Krishna subduing Kaliya and holding up Mount Govardhana, killing the crow demon, sucking at the breast of Putana, pulling the mortar tied to trees in which the two brothers were trapped, and fighting the horse demon (west).

Legendary episodes include two depictions on the same column of the churning of the cosmic ocean, with gods and demons tugging at the serpentine body of Shesha wrapped around the pole-like shaft of Mount Mandara. Then there is the story of the descent of Ganga, with the river flowing past Bhagiratha onto Shiva's outstretched lock of hair. Shiva's rescue of Makandeya is also depicted, with the the god appearing out of the *lingas* to save his youthful devotee who is shown already trapped in Yama's noose. Among the other mythical topics found here are the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, with well-wishers bearing garlands, Shiva on Kailasa, Shiva as an ascetic, visitors to a forest hermitage, and an elephant goring a victim. These scenes are all framed by monster masks spewing jewelled bands with lotuses in between, and occasional peacocks.

Half-columns set against the *mandapa* walls are noteworthy for their carvings of courtly couples in lyrical poses, embracing each other tenderly, the males taking the arm, touching the cheek, or even fondling the breasts of their companions. In one scene (east wall of the south minor sub-shrine), the male bends down to bring his head close to that of his lover (missing).

Mandapa columns have brackets with fluted sides carrying beams and roof slabs that slope in double tiers above the outer two aisles on three sides. (Log-like stone strips protect the external joints above.) Horizontal raised slabs roof the four bays of the central east-west aisle. The entablatures above are treated as relief facades, with blocked-out parapet elements, interrupted by elephant torso brackets, with angled lions at the corners. Transverse beams decorated with lotus ornament on their undersides support roof slabs with ceiling panels. The two surviving panels show a Nagaraja bearing garlands within a coiled serpentine body, accompanied by smaller *nagas* and celestials, and Lakshmi between elephants surrounded by a ring of petals.

Central aisle of the Virupaksha temple *mandapa*.



Columns in the Virupaksha temple *mandapa*

LEFT
Panel showing the marriage of Shiva and Parvati.

RIGHT
Panel showing scenes from the *Ramayana*.

Panel details from the columns in the Virupaksha temple *mandapa*

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT
A scene from *Mahabharata*; Arjuna fighting Shiva as *kirata* over the boar.

BELOW LEFT AND RIGHT
Shiva appearing before Markandeya; forest rishis.

Sub-shrines on either side of the vestibule doorway within the Virupaksha temple are treated as quasi-independent structures, with their own plinths, pilastered walls, doorways framed by pilasters bearing dwarfs or *makaras*, *kapotas* and capping *shala* roof. Installed in the north sub-shrine is an icon of eight-armed Durga stepping purposely on the inclined head of kneeling Mahisha, while violently thrusting her trident into his neck and her sword into his chest.

The vestibule doorway has river goddesses and female attendants beneath at either side. Secondary pilasters carry *makaras* spewing garlands, which meet in a medallion containing miniature figures of Shiva with Parvati on Nandi between *makara* jaws. An outer, full-height pair of pilasters, partly concealed by cascading *makara* tails, carries a *kapota* on a frieze of *hamsas*. The large *shala* above has a prominent *kudu* containing seated Shiva. Four-armed guardians, facing slightly away from each other, leaning on clubs, are carved onto the engaged columns at either side.

The vestibule ceiling has a circular composition showing two-armed Shiva dancing on a dwarf in the company of Parvati and Nandi, surrounded by dwarfs and flying couples. The underside of the beam separating the vestibule from the sanctuary is carved with a scene of devotees venerating a *linga*. A high pedestal with a green granite *linga* still receives worship within.

The outer sanctuary walls, within the sloping-roofed passageway, have empty recesses in the middle of three sides. They are flanked by pilasters supporting *makaras* with foliated tails ridden by dwarfs. The outer pairs of pilasters carry *kapota* eaves, animal friezes, and long *shalas*.

FACING PAGE
Durga spearing Mahisha; sculpture in the north sub-shrine in the Virupaksha temple.

BELOW
Worship of the *linga*; ceiling panel in the vestibule.

VIRUPAKSHA TEMPLE COMPOUND

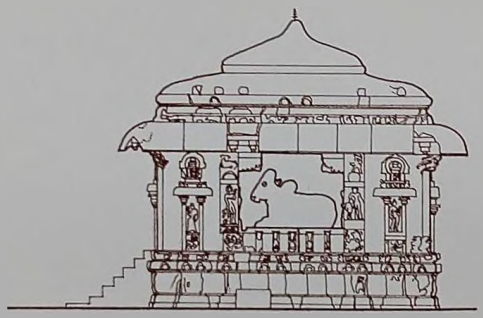
The free-standing Nandi pavilion in the Virupaksha temple compound accommodated a magnificent monolithic Nandi, more than 2 metres high. Shiva's bull is depicted seated naturalistically, facing towards the east doorway of the main temple. The floor of the pavilion is raised on a high basement with leaping animals and attendants (worn), capped with a *kapota*. Walls framing broad openings in the middle of each side have narrow niches accommodating courtly maidens, some in alluring postures, topped with *kapotas* and *kudus*. Other maidens as well as couples adorn the decorated columns framing the openings. Foliate panels beneath are particularly imaginative. The openings have balcony seating adorned with pots, foliated panels and *yalis*, but have been partly cut. Small blocks with flying figures at the topmost corners of the walls carry the smoothly curved eaves with deeply carved internal ribs and rafters. An animal frieze above marks the ends of the roof slabs above, the joints protected by log-like stone strips.

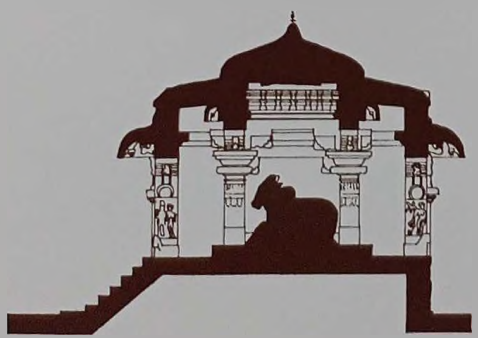
The interior of the Nandi pavilion has four columns with massive circular shafts decorated with petals and garlands. Cushion-like circular capitals and projecting square capitals carry fluted brackets with extended *yalis*, with curved eaves on *ganas* above. A horizontal ceiling with a lotus medallion is positioned over the central bay, with sloping roof slabs on four sides.

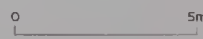
FACING PAGE LEFT
Section and elevation of the Nandi pavilion.

FACING PAGE RIGHT
Courtly couple on one of the columns.

BELOW Nandi pavilion from the east.



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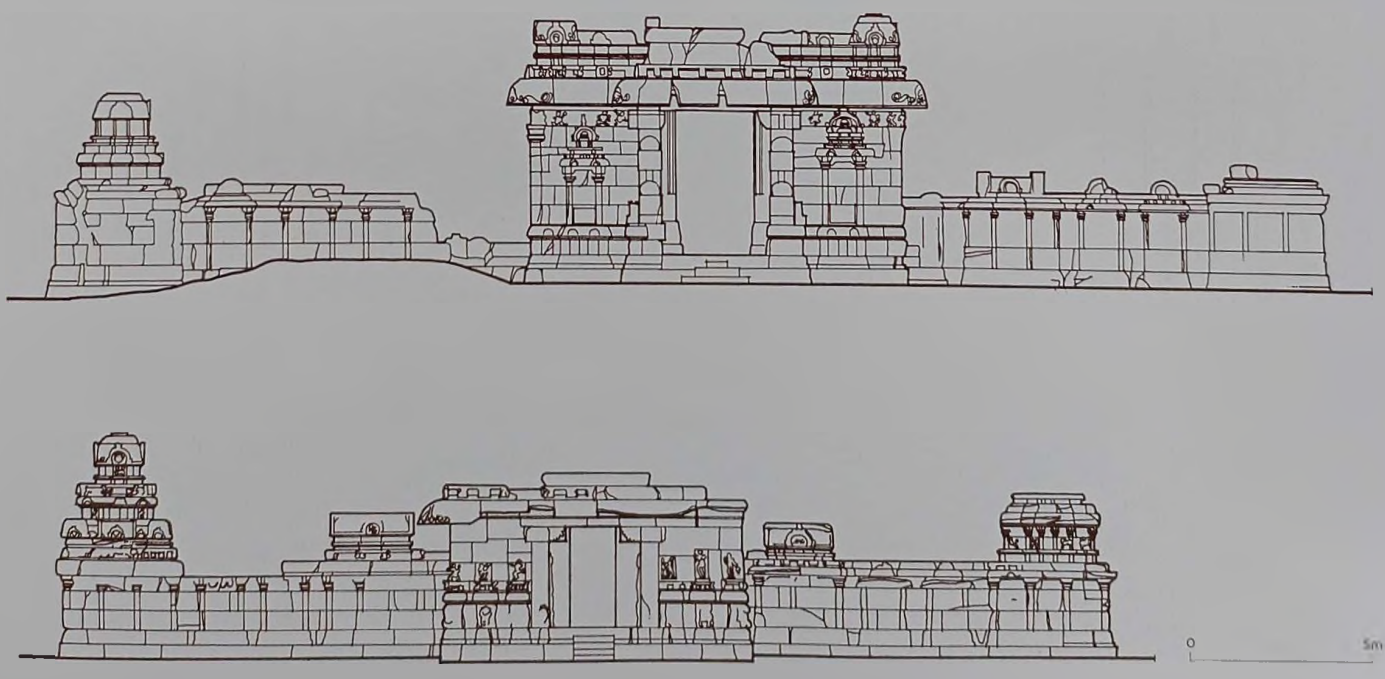
The paved compound of the Virupaksha temple is entered from the river bank on the east through a large gateway. This has an east-west passageway at ground level flanked by raised floor areas with columns, walled in on the sides; a porch is provided on the east. The gateway's outer walls have shallow niches topped with *kapota* eaves and *kudus* filled with icons and temple models. Inscriptions on the engaged columns flanking its outer (eastern) entrance mention the temple architects already referred to. One record asserts that Vikramaditya had 'defeated [the Pallava king of] Kanchi[puram] thrice'. Flying *ganas* and a frieze of garlands are seen at the top of the walls, overhung by deep eaves that run around the building, including the porch. The parapet above employs corner *kutas* and intermediate *shalas*, some lost. Porch columns with raised bands and decorated part-circles are carved with embracing couples at either side of the east passageway doorway. Balcony seating in the porch has pot motifs between pilasters. An unfinished, huge Nandi is placed outside the gateway near the river.

The gateway in the middle of the west compound walls is smaller and less elaborate, but is of interest for the dwarfs and attendant figures carved onto the lower parts of its outer walls (worn). Guardian figures flank the central passageway. The curved eaves above are now mostly broken.

Dilapidated sub-shrines line the inner face of the enclosure walls on four sides of the compound. The best preserved examples, at the two north-western corners, have small chambers with pyramidal towers topped by *kuta* roofs. The southern face of one of these has pilasters carrying *makaras* with luxuriant tails and dwarf riders, with a guardian seated in between. The enclosure walls are topped with parapet elements, including prominent *shalas*, some still in place. Sculpted panels were incorporated into the walls, but only eroded examples remain *in situ*. Two of the best preserved panels have now been removed to the Archaeological Museum in Badami.

FACING PAGE
Nandi under worship in the pavilion in the Virupaksha temple compound.

BELOW
Outer elevations of the east and west compound walls.



MALLIKARJUNA TEMPLE

From Kirttivarma II's pillar edict it is learned that the Mallikarjuna temple was built by his mother, Trailokyamahadevi, the younger of the two sister queens of Vikramaditya II, and named after her as Trailokeshvara. The historical link with the Virupaksha temple, commissioned by the king's elder sister, is confirmed architecturally, the two projects being conceived as matching monuments laid out in a unique diagonal fashion.

From its plan and exterior treatment, together with the unfinished condition of many of its sculptures, it is clear that work on the Mallikarjuna must have commenced at a later date than on the Virupaksha, on which it is clearly modelled. Some years must have intervened between these two projects since the Mallikarjuna presents a discernible architectural advance on the Virupaksha. Yet so close are the overall layout, external elevation and interior decor of the Mallikarjuna to its earlier neighbour that the description given here may avoid repetition by concentrating mainly on dissimilarities.

The plan of the Mallikarjuna is a slightly smaller and more compact version of that of the Virupaksha: though the three porch projections of the *mandapa* are reduced, the central projections on the passageway walls are extended to create pilastered side faces. The Nandi pavilion in front of the east porch seems never to have been completed. But the Mallikarjuna must have also been conceived as a complex, with its own walled compound and entrance gateways, since it is ingeniously related to the Virupaksha, so as to exploit a section of the enclosure walls of its earlier neighbour. Portions of the enclosure walls survive on the south and west, together with part of the west gateway. The absence of enclosure walls on the north, however, is best explained by a miscalculation in the overall layout of the complex, which extended too close to the already existing Kashivishvanatha.

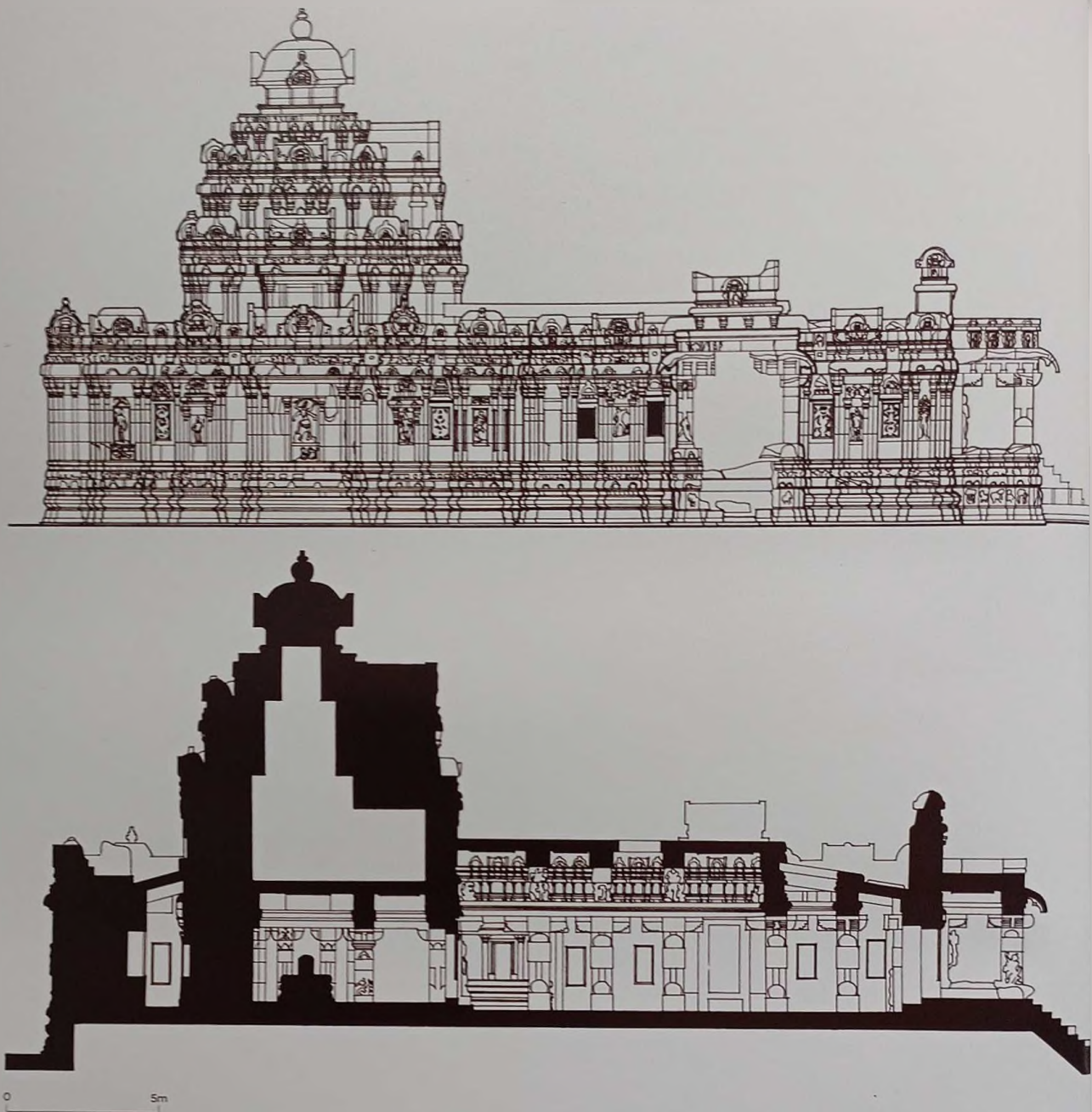
While the exterior of the Mallikarjuna is closely modelled on the Virupaksha there are significant differences: triple pairs of pilasters emphasising the central projections on the passageway walls; double pairs of pilasters on the storeys of the tower; and the increased articulation of the parapet elements at all levels. The result is a greater three-dimensional massing of volumes, highlighted by the hemisphere that caps the tower, the only instance of this roof form in Early Chalukya architecture. Minor variations are the shorter wall projections on either side of the porches; the single ornamental *kudus* in the parapet *shalas* over the central passageway projections; and the revival of the Nataraja theme for the *gavaksha* arch on the frontal face of the tower.

The wall sculptures and perforated windows repeat the basic arrangement of the Virupaksha, though many are incomplete or damaged, or altogether missing. No sculptures are preserved on the east walls of the temple, but elsewhere there is the usual array of Shiva icons, including one of Bhikshatana, with the upper body twisted around so that the god can make a gesture of warning with his left hand, Bhikshatana with matted hair, Lakulisha, and Shiva spreading out the skin of the elephant demon (all on the south walls). The close resemblance of this last panel to those on the Sangameshvara suggests that it may have been removed from that temple. The west passageway walls have a vigorous Nataraja on the central projection that may also have come from the Sangameshvara temple. The Ardhanarishvara panel to the left has a delicate chiselled face and a clearly divided headdress. Perforated swags of foliation are seen in the adjacent window. Shiva icons on the north walls are set between windows with diverse foliate designs.

As in the Virupaksha porches, those of the Mallikarjuna are raised on basements with friezes of lions and elephants depicted in spirited postures, best seen on the east and north. One column on the east porch has a carving of the eight-armed Narasimha grappling with his victim. The column opposite has a pair of slender maidens with attenuated bodies; one holds a musical instrument which a female dwarf attempts to seize. Guardians,

now mostly broken, are carved onto the engaged columns at the rear. The doorway in between shows Vishnu on Garuda on the lintel, and five model shrines above. A worn lotus ceiling is seen above. Carvings on the columns of the north porch include Vishnu riding on Garuda, and a richly attired couple draped with ornaments, the male with a tall headdress (right-hand column). Simply dressed lovers, their hair tied up in buns, are seen on the opposite column. Guardians on the engaged columns to the rear hold tridents and lean on clubs (one lost). They are of interest for their naturalism and expressiveness.

The Mallikarjuna temple from the south-east.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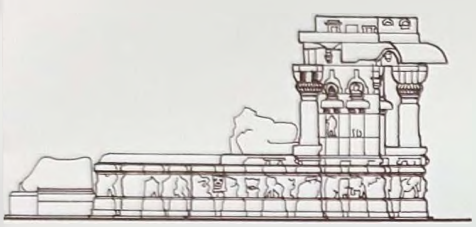

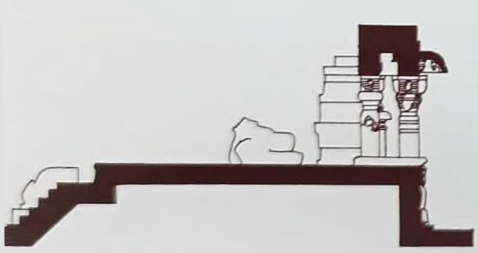

ABOVE
Section and elevation of the Mallikarjuna temple, with its dilapidated Nandi pavilion.

RIGHT
Courtly maidens; column carving in the east porch of the temple.

RIGHT AND FACING PAGE
Dancing Shiva; two wall panels on the Mallikarjuna temple.

The principal interest of the Mallikarjuna's *mandapa* interior is provided by the column reliefs, though these are generally not as finely worked. The Krishna story is represented by panels illustrating the birth and rescue of Krishna as a baby, the wicked king Kamsa killing babies, Krishna kicking the cart, stealing the butter, pulling the mortar between two trees, and sucking at the breast of Putana. The narrative concludes with the youthful god wrestling with human adversaries and animal demons, stepping on Kaliya in the lotus pond, and holding up Mount Govardhana. In the Kiratarjuniya story, Shiva and Arjuna shoot arrows at the boar, and then fight before Shiva is compelled to grant the magic axe to Arjuna, who then shows it to his father and brothers. *Ramayana* scenes are mostly restricted to forest scenes. Among legendary depictions are Shiva seated on Kailasa, a sage worshipping a *linga*, and Narasimha, overpowering his victim.

A particular feature of the Mallikarjuna column reliefs is the abundance of scenes drawn from the *Panchatantra*. One composition refers to the story of the monkey with a wedge, the animal being depicted sitting at a desk. Other *Panchatantra* topics include the monkey with the crocodile, and the mongoose killing the snake that had threatened a sleeping child, and then being killed in error by the mother. The story of Indra seducing the forest maiden Ahalya, and then flying with her through the air, is illustrated in several scenes. Then there is the tale of the pigeon bearing a love note to a queen from an admirer, receiving the bird in her private apartments, and then being punished by the king who threatens to have her trampled by an elephant. As in the Virupaksha temple, there are two versions of the churning of the ocean myth. The Pallava inspired composition of Durga on a lion advancing towards Mahisha, carved on a column bracket, has already been noticed.

The entablatures above the beams over the *mandapa*'s central aisle are fashioned as relief facades accommodating courtly couples, headed by *shalas* and *kutas*. Elephant torsos with riders are set in between, with angled lions at the corners. Transverse beams

LEFT
Flying couple; column detail in the *mandapa*.

FACING PAGE
Interior of the Mallikarjuna temple *mandapa*.

have their undersides decorated with creeper motifs, and foliation incorporating a couple with part-human bodies and a pair of geese. Surviving raised ceiling panels above show an eight-armed dancing Shiva accompanied by Parvati and Nandi, Nagaraja with a coiled tail, and Lakshmi between elephants within a ring of lotus ornament and flying celestials. Sloping slabs in two tiers roof the aisles on three sides.

Half-columns engaged into the *mandapa* walls are embellished with courtly couples attired in a remarkable variety of costumes and headdresses, and posed in affectionate embraces. In one example a male wearing a tunic with a dagger in his belt gazing adoringly at his dancing companion; elsewhere, a male wearing a crown-like cap gently touches the chin of his companion.

The sub-shrines of the Mallikarjuna interior are simple and without *shala* roofs. Now empty, they were probably dedicated to Ganesha (south) and Durga (north). Well-preserved guardians, among the most expressive at Pattadakal, are carved onto the engaged columns on either side of the vestibule doorway. The figures stand with one leg behind the other in symmetrical poses. They hold the usual tridents, and lean on clubs (now lost). The headdresses, jewels and tasselled costumes are intricately worked; so, too, the eyebrows, protruding eyes and open mouths with tusks. The doorway itself has pilasters set in bands, occasionally with miniature dancing dwarfs or couples. Flying Garuda appears over the lintel, with river goddesses and attendants beneath at either side. A pilastered shrine housing Shiva and Parvati is positioned in the entablature over the *kapota* above.

The ceiling within the vestibule has a nine-panelled composition with Shiva and Parvati in the central compartment, surrounded by celestials. A simple lotus with flying figures adorns the sanctuary ceiling, below which is a green granite *linga* on a pedestal. Empty niches, partly unfinished, mark the midpoints of the outer sanctuary walls, within the passageway.

Columns in the Mallikarjuna temple *mandapa*

RIGHT
Embracing courtly couple.

FACING PAGE
Two panels showing the churning of the cosmic ocean, with Durga riding on the lion towards Mahisha above.

FACING PAGE
Wall detail (above) and animal basement on the pavilion (below).

BELOW
Nandi pavilion of the Mallikarjuna temple.

The greatly dilapidated Nandi pavilion that stands in front of the Mallikarjuna repeats the scheme of the Virupaksha pavilion, but with prominent projecting porches on four sides, of which only that on the east survives. The pavilion is raised on a basement with a frieze of lions and *yalis* and elephants with curling trunks. Pilastered niches on the corner walls accommodate beguiling maidens. One example to the right of the east porch has one foot bent up, holding a parrot. Maidens and couples on the engaged columns framing the opening here are damaged. The porch columns have circular fluted shafts decorated with garlands and circular capitals, sheltered by the usual curved eaves. Two separate, fragmentary green stone Nandis are placed on the raised floor within the pavilion; one is unfinished, the other has been sheared off.

The Papanatha temple
from the south.

PAPANATHA TEMPLE

The Papanatha is unique in that it has two interconnecting *mandapas*. These are entered from the east through a porch with balcony seating, preceded by double flights of transverse steps (rebuilt). The outer, larger *mandapa* has five aisles in both directions, and shrine-like niches in the middle of the north and south sides. The doorway in the rear (west) leads to the inner, smaller *mandapa*, with triple aisles. Beyond lies the sanctuary, surrounded by a narrow passageway lit on three sides by pairs of windows sheltered by small porches. This unique scheme is best explained by three successive constructional phases. In its initial phase the Papanatha was conceived as a sanctuary crowned with a *shikhara* tower to be preceded by a small *mandapa*, as in the Kadasiddheshvara and Jambulinga temples elsewhere at Pattadakal, but which was probably never finished. In the second phase, the sanctuary was contained within a rectangle of walls creating a passageway with projecting porches on three sides, encasing the stumps of the unfinished,

original *mandapa* walls, and incorporating a triple-aisled *mandapa* in front. (At this stage the Papanatha's layout would have resembled that of the Galaganatha, though at a smaller scale.) Shortly afterwards, a second *mandapa* with an entrance porch was added. However, the builders responsible for this third and last phase took care to blend this addition with the previous phase, with the result that there is almost no deviation in architectural design and sculptural detail, but resulting in unusually long, but coherent, side elevations.

The Papanatha's outer walls are raised on a basement with a faceted rounded central course topped by a recessed course with foliate panels. This sequence of mouldings is partly interrupted at the porch extensions on four sides by friezes of lions and elephants. The walls present lines of niches projecting slightly away from the wall, echoed in the basement mouldings beneath, but not reaching the *kapota* cornice above. The niches are formed by pairs of secondary pilasters with double capitals and fluted brackets topped by *kapotas* and triangular pediments composed of full and half-*gavakshas*. Flying couples are carved onto the wall surfaces between the niche pediments on the outer *mandapa* walls. Full-height pilasters mark the corners of the *mandapas* and the central niches on the inner *mandapa* walls; they also frame all the niches on the outer *mandapa* walls. Windows are inserted into several of the spaces between the niches. The *kapota* cornice is topped with an animal frieze, now much worn, and a parapet with *shalas*, *kutas* and *kudus*, some fallen. The sanctuary tower is of the *shikhara* type, with a frontal projection that may have been added during the building's second or third constructional phase. The *gavaksha*, containing a Nataraja icon, is raised on three small niches composed of complex *gavaksha* pediments, recalling the scheme of the Kashivishvanatha temple. No *amalaka* finial is preserved.

Identifying labels and artists' names are engraved beside many of the wall panels. One inscription mentions Revadi Ovajja, disciple of Sarvasiddhi Acharya, one of the architects of the Virupaksha temple. Referring to himself as the 'maker of the southern side [of the temple]', Revadi Ovajja may have been the principal artist responsible for the panels on this face of the Papanatha, which are distinct in subject and style. The name Baladeva occurs several times.

Narratives on the Papanatha focus primarily on the *Ramayana* and the Kiratarjuniya story. *Ramayana* scenes run from west to east across the south walls of both *mandapas*. The sequence begins with Dasharatha seated together with a sage, then with a priest in front of a sacrificial fire, after which the king presents offerings to his wives. The following niche panel shows Kaikeyi with Rama, and Lakshmana and two sages (above), and Rama shooting a bow at a wheeled chariot (below). The story continues with Vishvamitra's education of Rama and Lakshmana (above), and Rama shooting (below). The *Ramayana* forest episodes begin at the south-western corner of the outer *mandapa* where Rama, Lakshmana and Sita bid farewell to Dasharatha and his wives, and then set off for the forest (south face). Shurpanakha's disfigurement by Lakshmana comes next, followed by Rama and Lakshmana aiming their bows, their bodies bent backwards, at a crowd of demons in the adjacent panel. The following panel shows Shurpanakha in front of Ravana. The golden deer episode is reserved for the panel in the central niche on the outer *mandapa*: Lakshmana points out the prancing deer to Rama and Sita (behind), and then shoots an arrow at the animal (in front). The next panel portrays Ravana as an ascetic visiting Sita, then comes the scene of Jatayu attacking Ravana as he abducts Sita. Rama and Lakshmana at the monkey court, and the fight between Vali and Sugriva, are combined in the following panel. The monkey combat is then repeated together with the episode in which Rama kills Vali, who is seen dying in one corner. The last niche panel on this face portrays a line of monkeys hauling boulders in the act of building the bridge to Lanka, while Rama, seated with Lakshmana and Hanuman, waits patiently above. A shallow relief to the right depicts the cubic blocks of the bridge

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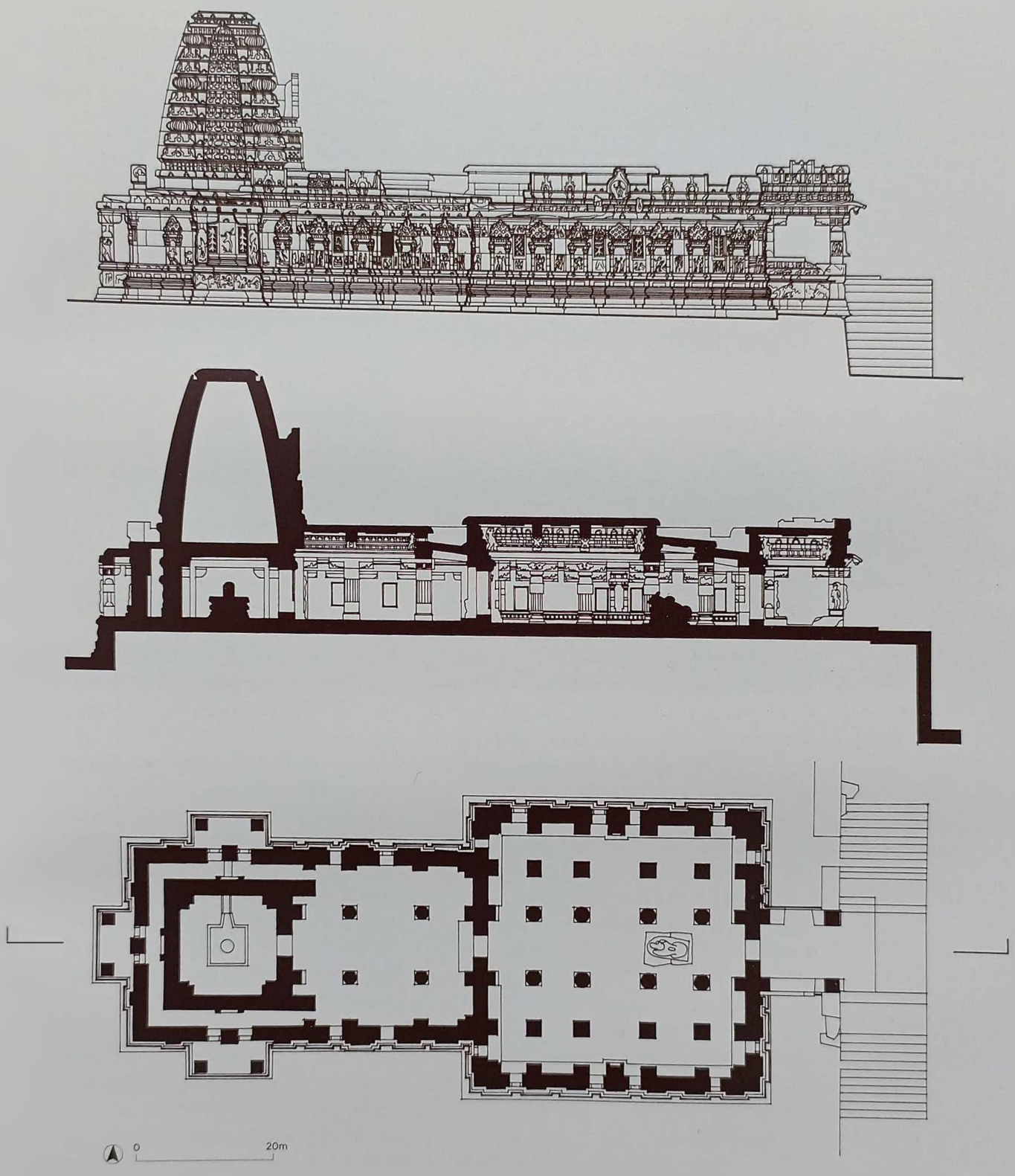
Plan, section and elevation of the Papanatha temple.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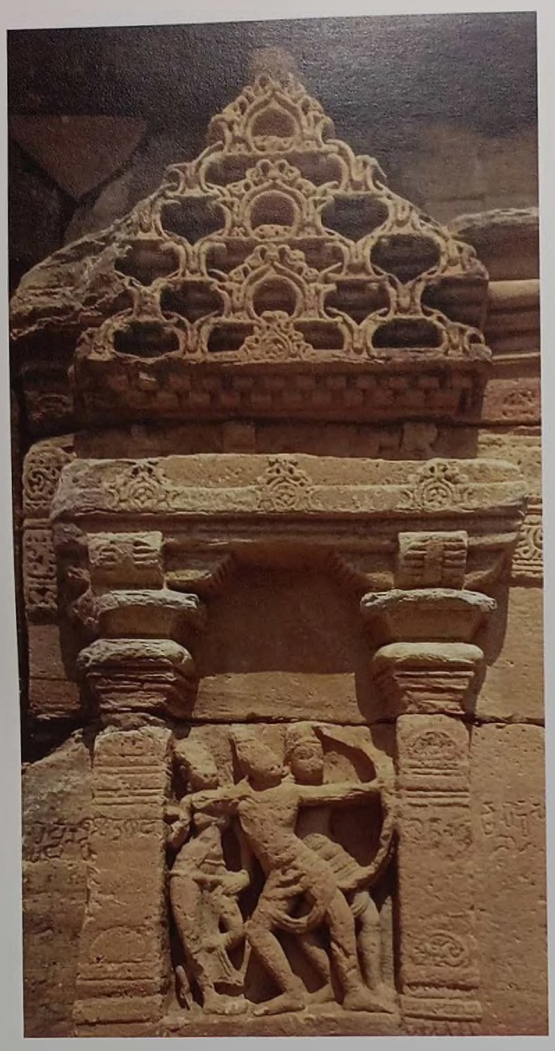

surrounded by the curling waves of the ocean. This leads directly to the block at the south-east corner of the outer *mandapa*, which shows Rama and Lakshmana in the company of their monkey allies. On the east face of the block, Rama shoots an arrow towards the demons depicted in the first niche panel on the east *mandapa* walls. In the next niche panel, Rama rides his chariot, his legs apart and his arms outstretched, accompanied by warriors whose spears are seen in shallow relief at the rear. The worn panel on the adjacent shallow projection shows Sita in the grove within Ravana's palace (below). The story concludes on the faces of one of the east porch columns.

A lesser number of panels on the north and east faces of the outer *mandapa* walls are devoted to the Kiratarjuniya story. The narrative proceeds from west to east, beginning with Arjuna and Shiva as hunters aiming their bows towards a boar, which appears in the intervening wall panel, of which only the slain human counterpart is now visible. Damaged figures of Shiva and Arjuna fighting over who first shot the boar occupy the lower half of the niche panel at the northern end of the *mandapa*'s east wall. Shiva with Parvati riding on Nandi, handing the magic axe to Arjuna, appear in the upper half. The ensuing battle is condensed into a single niche panel on the other side of a window with swathes of foliation, and on a relief composition on the side face of the engaged column of the east porch that shows Arjuna in a chariot driven by Krishna. As with the *Ramayana*, the story concludes on one of the columns of the east porch.

Ramayana wall panels on the Papanatha temple

FACING PAGE
Rama shoots an arrow at the golden deer (left); Ravana kills the vulture Jatayu (right).

LEFT
Rama's monkey allies; A seated Ravana (extreme left).

Wall sculptures at the western end of the temple, beside the three porches, depict the *dikpalas*, Brahma, Mahishasuramardini, Ganesha, Varaha and Narasimha. Severely damaged panels inside the porch, probably all portraying Shiva, are flanked by pairs of perforated windows, two fashioned as pairs of prancing *yalis* with riders (south). Porch columns here have eroded carvings of Vishnu, Krishna holding up Mount Govardhana and Trivikrama. On the north passageway and inner *mandapa* walls there are additional carvings of Shiva leaning on Nandi, standing Vishnu, Shiva with Parvati, and Ravana beneath Kailasa.

The eastern porch of the Papanatha temple is richly treated. The animal friezes noticed on the basements of the other porches here take on a dramatic character, the lions and elephants shown savagely attacking each other. The animals continue onto what would have been the sides of the transverse access steps. Balcony slabs above are adorned with a row of pots, broken on the north side. The outer (east) and inner faces of the porch columns have embracing couples, a horse-headed woman and companion beneath a tree, and a courtly maiden accompanied by a female dwarf (right). Other column faces are devoted to the final scenes of the *Ramayana* and Kiratarjuniya narratives from the outer *mandapa* walls. The south face of the left-hand column shows Rama and Sita surrounded by monkeys (below), and the coronation of Rama in the presence of Sita, monkeys, dancers and drummers (above). The north face of the right-hand column depicts the climax of the *Mahabharata*, with Arjuna riding in a chariot, brandishing a sword in one hand, valiantly fighting a crowd of enemies. Fluted brackets with flowing foliation and *yalis* carry the curved eaves, with cut-out ribs and rafters on the undersides, sheltering the porch columns. The parapet above employs reduced *kuta* and *shala* elements.

Engaged columns at the rear of the east porch had guardians leaning on clubs, but only that on the right survives. The doorway in between is one of the most ornate at Pattadakal. Panels beneath at either side show river goddesses with female attendants. An inner, shorter pair of fluted pilasters supports *makaras* with richly modelled foliated tails and diminutive rivers. Garlands spewing from their open jaws meet in a central medallion containing a tiny image of Lakshmi. An outer, higher pair of pilasters, with shafts partly concealed by cascading *makara* tails, carries a *kapota* with *kudus*, and an entablature crowned by a *shala* with a central *kudu*.

The porch ceiling is raised on beams with *kapotas*, and entablatures and parapets above. Leaping lions and elephants angle outwards from the corners. Above is a ceiling panel of Shiva dancing on a dwarf. Nataraja is depicted with angular limbs, the ankles crossed. He has eight arms and wears a tall crown. Parvati and musicians are in attendance as well as flying couples.

Column carvings on the east porch of the Papanatha temple

RIGHT
Rama enthroned together with Sita and the monkey allies; and Arjuna riding in the chariot.

FACING PAGE
Doorway in the east porch.

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While the outer *mandapa* of the Papanatha temple echoes the layouts of the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna *mandapas*, the Papanatha example is smaller and lower, but in many respects more ornate. A majestic, polished sandstone Nandi set into the floor was possibly placed on a plinth outside the temple when there was a single *mandapa* only, to be incorporated into the interior when the second *mandapa* was constructed.

Columns lining the central east-west aisle of the outer *mandapa* have sixteen-sided shafts interrupted by uncarved blocks, with attendant maidens beneath, four of which face into the aisle. The capitals are of the circular cushion type, or cubical type with typical Nagara styled pot-and-foliage motifs. The brackets are fluted with extended *yalis* on the undersides; four brackets have additional monster masks in extravagant foliation on the sides. The beams carry *kapotas* with ornate *kudus*, surmounted by animal friezes, and entablatures headed by *shalas* and small perforations to admit light. Full-bodied lions angle inwards from the corners, while similar leaping animals emerge from the open-mouthed *makara* brackets that carry the two transverse beams. The undersides of the beams have richly textured foliate swirls containing figures and beasts. The raised horizontal roof slabs have ceiling panels: from east to west these show a nine-compartment composition with Vishnu asleep on Shesha surrounded by the *dikpalas*; a Nagaraja holding a garland; and Lakshmi with elephants within a ring of interlocking flying celestials.

Other columns in the outer *mandapa*, including those set into the low bench that runs around the walls, have the usual bands, part-circles and connecting vertical strips, with fluted brackets above. The engaged peripheral columns are embellished with embracing couples, now mostly worn, but still notable for their naturalistic modelling and lyrical poses. Many of the males wear tall pointed crowns and jewelled costumes. The beams carrying the sloping roof slabs over the outer aisles have friezes of dwarfs, flying figures and garlands, occasionally also legendary reliefs, such as the scenes of Shiva and Parvati on the beam immediately inside the east doorway. Niches headed with *kapotas* and *shalas* in the middle of the side walls accommodate images of Ganesha (south), and Mahishasuramardini spearing a human version of Mahisha, who arches backwards (north).

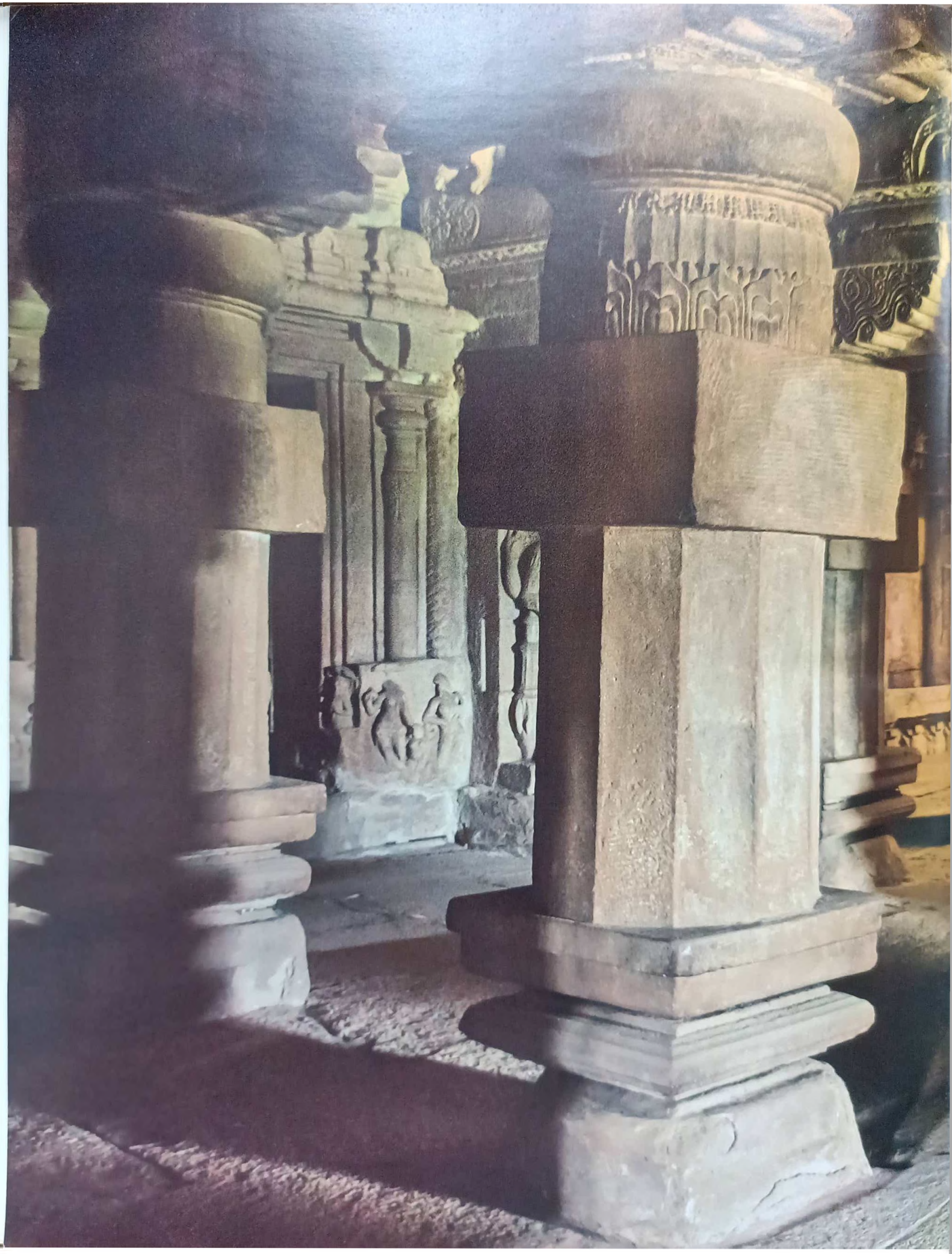
The doorway linking the two *mandapas* is flanked by engaged columns carved with four-armed guardians, leaning in complementary poses on clubs, with snakes and trident or axe in the rear hands. They are ornately dressed, with curling hair fanning out over their shoulders. The opening is framed by a pair of circular pilasters carrying a *kapota* topped with a series of parapet elements. Garuda appears over the opening, with river goddesses and attendants beneath at either side.

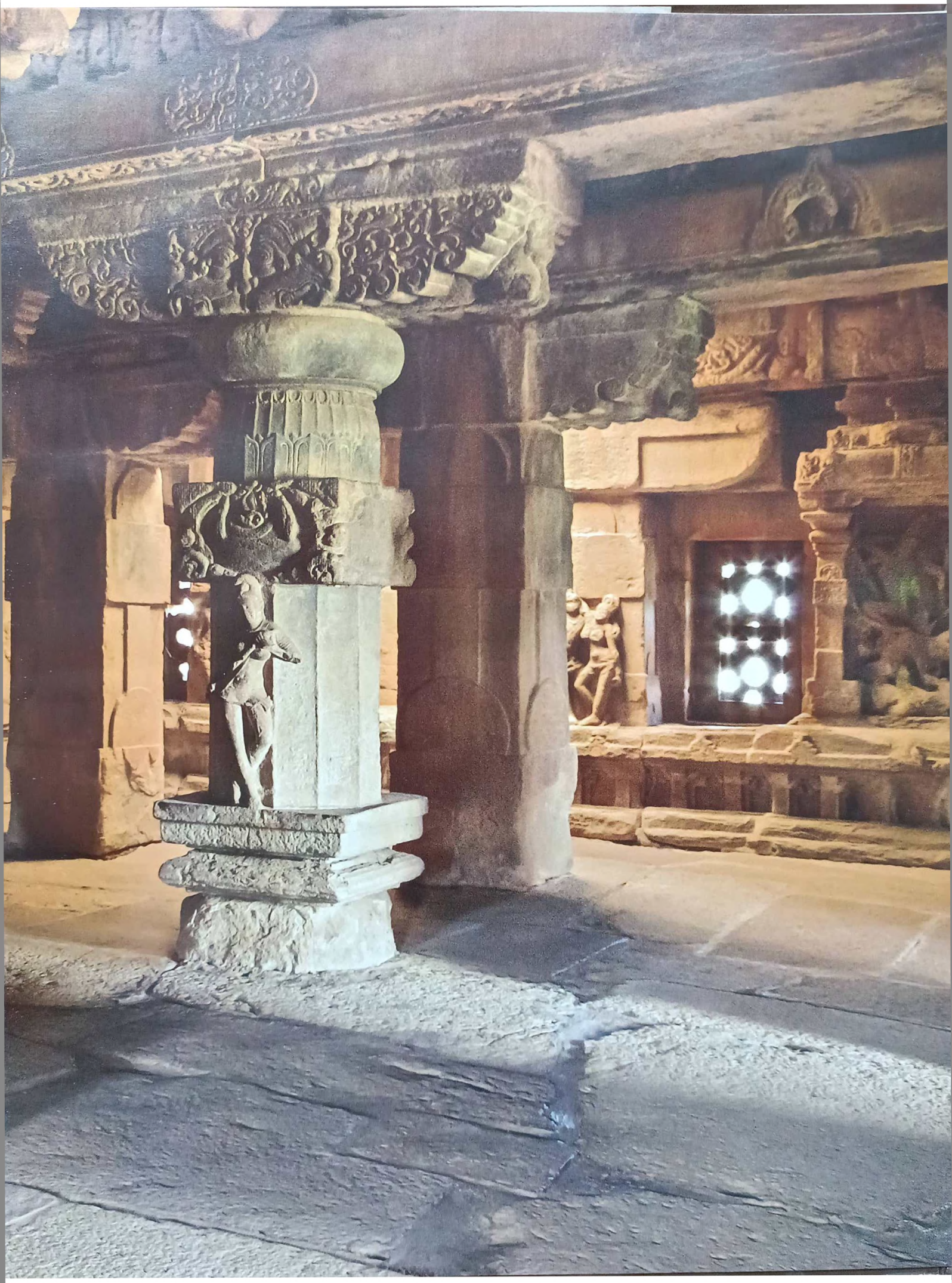
The four central columns of the inner *mandapa* have sixteen-sided shafts between undecorated cubical blocks. Column brackets over the two bays in front of the sanctuary doorway carry beams and double lines of pilasters with perforations. Lions angle outwards at two corners, while cut-out figures emerging from *makara* jaws carry the single transverse beam, its sides sculpted with garlands and dwarfs. Similar figures are seen on the beam over the sanctuary doorway, where Lakshmi is flanked by elephants. The two ceiling panels on the raised and horizontal roof slabs above portray Shiva dancing on a dwarf, in the company of Parvati, Nandi and musicians, and a lotus-bearing Nagaraja with celestials. They are among the finest renditions of these ubiquitous themes in Early Chalukya art.

The sanctuary doorway, surrounded by bands only, is partly carved with foliation and miniature figures, with Garuda on the lintel. Guardians on the engaged columns at either side are less richly attired and more softly modelled than their counterparts in the outer *mandapa*. Diminutive couples are seen at the bases of the peripheral columns.

ABOVE
Shiva dancing; ceiling panel in the inner *mandapa* of the Papanatha temple.

FOLLOWING PAGES
Outer *mandapa* of the temple.





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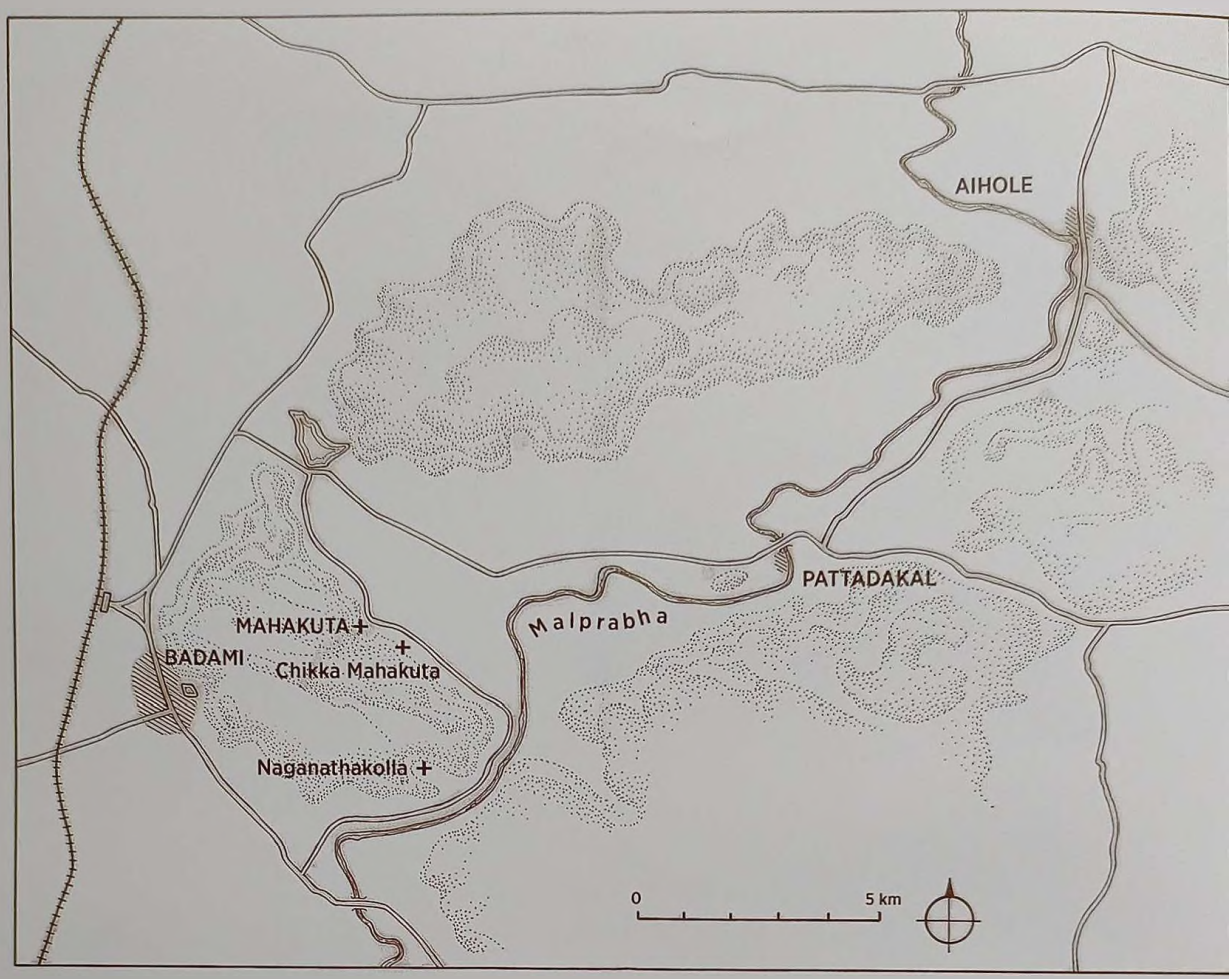
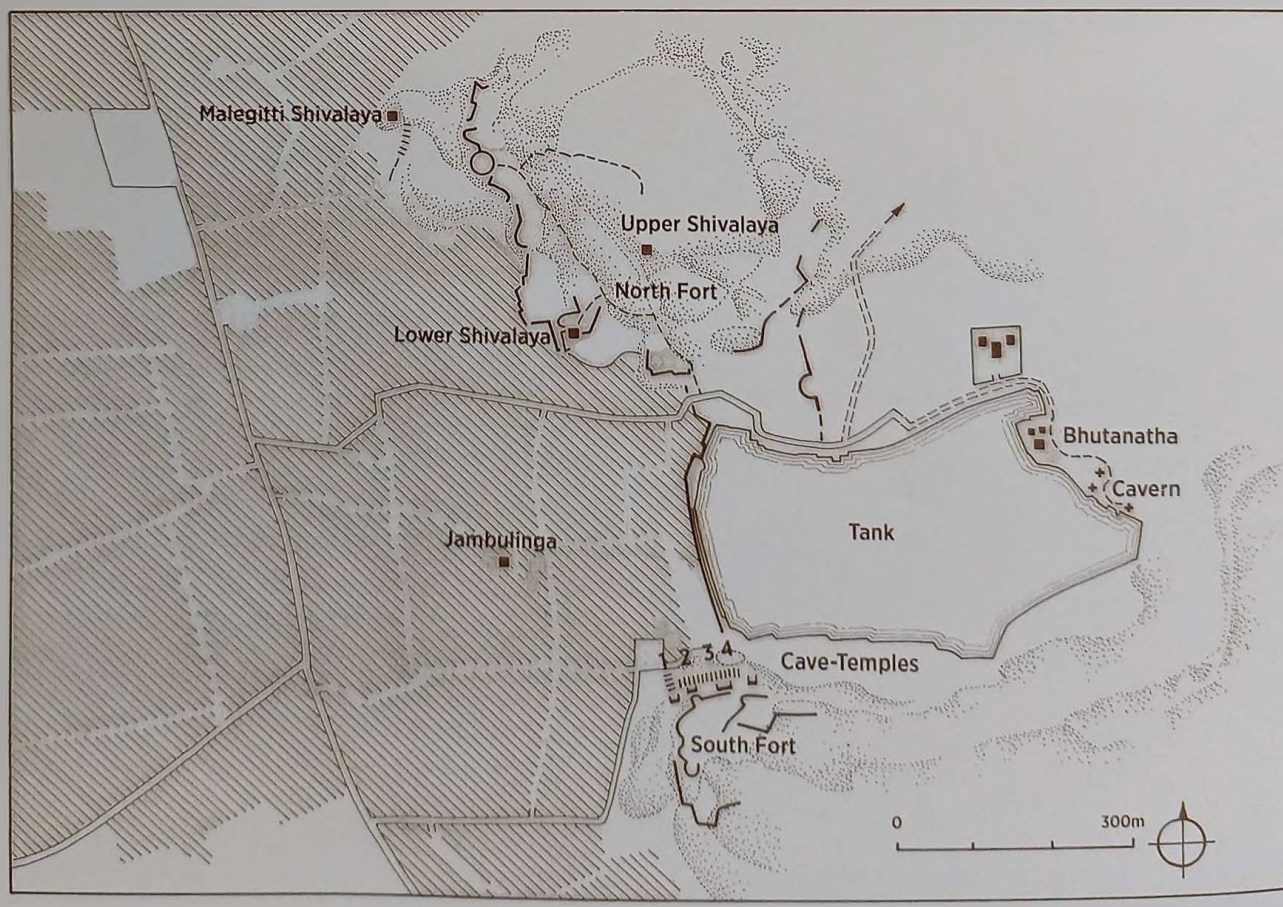
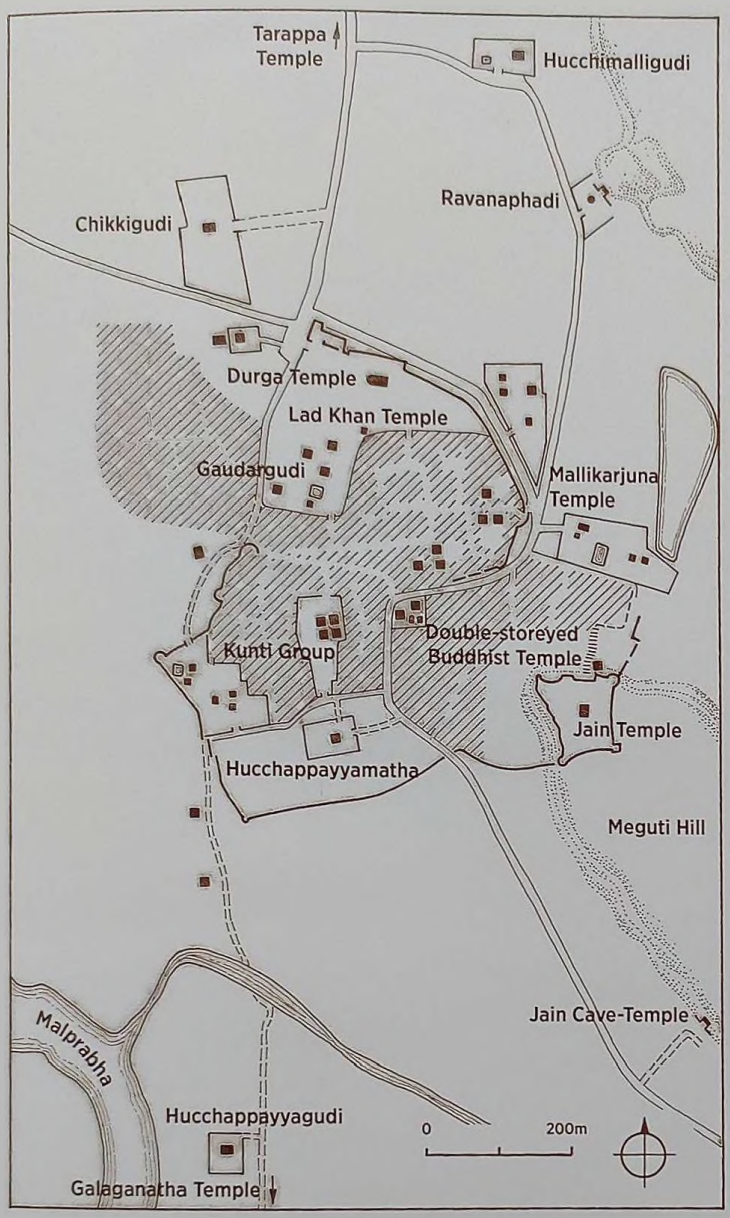

AIHOLE
PATTADAKAL
Malprabha
MAHAKUTA
BADAMI
Chikka Mahakuta
Naganathakolla
0
5 km


Malegitti Shivalaya
Upper Shivalaya
North Fort
Lower Shivalaya
Bhutanatha
Cavern
Tank
Jambulinga
1 2 3 4
Cave-Temples
South Fort
0
300m



ABOVE
Temples in Aihole.

FACING PAGE ABOVE
Malprabha valley locating the Early Chalukya temple sites.

FACING PAGE BELOW
Temples in Badami.

BUILDING CHRONOLOGY

The four-phase scheme proposed here is based on constructional techniques and stylistic developments. Given the lack of dated monuments it can only be tentative.

FIRST PHASE, second half of the 6th century
Rock-cut architecture
Reigns of Polakeshi I (ca 540–66) and Kirttivarma I (566–92)
- Badami, Caves 1 to 4 (Cave 3 dated Shaka 500 = 578 CE)
- Aihole, Ravanaphadi and Buddhist and Jain cave-temples

SECOND PHASE, first half of the 7th century
Beginning of the Dravida style
Reigns of Mangalesha (592–610) and Polakeshi II (610–42)
- Aihole, Jain temple on Meguti hill (dated Shaka 556 = 634 CE)
- Badami, Lower and Upper Shivalayas
- Badami, Malegitti Shivalaya
- Mahakuta, Bananti temple

Pallava Interregnum, middle of the 7th Century

THIRD PHASE, second half of the 7th century
Maturity of the Dravida style and introduction of the Nagara style
Reigns of Vikramaditya I (654–71) and Vinayaditya, (671–96), and the first years of Vijayaditya's reign (696–733)
- Mahakuta, Mahakuteshvara and Mallikarjuna temples
- Mahakuta, Sangameshvara and Virupaksheshvara temples
- Naganathakolla, Naganatha temple
- Badami, Jambulinga temple (dated 3rd regnal year of Vijayaditya = 699 CE)
- Pattadakal, Galaganatha temple

FOURTH PHASE, first half of the 8th century
Climax of the Dravida and Nagara styles,
emergence of other idioms and stylistic intermingling
Later years of Vijayaditya's reign (696–733), and reigns of Vikramaditya II (733–44) and Kirttivarma II (744–57)
- Pattadakal, Sangameshvara (reign of Vijayaditya according to Kirttivarma II's pillar inscription)
- Pattadakal, Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples (reign of Vikramaditya II according to Kirttivarma II's pillar inscription)
- Pattadakal, Kashivishvanatha and Papanatha temples
- Badami, Bhutanatha temple
- Aihole, Gaudargudi and Chikkigudi
- Aihole, Hucchappayyamatha, Hucchappayyagudi and Hucchimalligudi
- Aihole, Durga and Lad Khan temples
- Aihole, Galaganatha and Mallikarjuna temples

GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

amalaka, circular ribbed finial in Nagara styled temples
apsidal, with a semicircular end
balustrade, shaped block generally flanking a flight of steps
basement, mouldings supporting external walls
beam, horizontal or angled block carrying roof slabs
chaitya, Buddhist shrine, often with an apsidal-ended plan
ceiling, underside of roof slab
Dravida, Southern Indian style
durg, fort
eaves, rounded moulding sheltering an open porch or *mandapa*
entablature, panel above beams or eaves
fluted, gently curved incisions
frieze, row of carved figures, animals or decorative motifs
gavaksha, horseshoe-shaped window-like motif in Nagara architecture
gudi, temple
kalasha, water-pot, especially in stone as a rooftop finial
kapota, curved eave-like moulding
kudu, horseshoe-shaped window-like motif, usually set in a *kapota*, in Dravida temples
kuta, square-to-dome roof
mandapa, columned hall of a temple
Nagara, Northern Indian style
panjara, horseshoe-shaped parapet element resembling a *kudu*
parapet, wall at the top of a building concealing the roof slabs
pediment, mouldings heading a niche, window or doorway
pilaster, slender column forming part of the wall blocks
pitha, pedestal
shala, barrel-vaulted roof
shikhara, curved tower in Nagara temples
tirtha, sacred site, generally with a pool or on a river
upana, bottom moulding of a basement series
vestibule, antechamber in front of a sanctuary
vihara, Buddhist monastery

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN NAMES

Adinatha, the first *Tirthankara*
Aditya, title of Surya
Agastya, a sage
Agni, god of fire; one of the *dikpalas*
Ahalya, wife of a sage seduced by Indra
Ambika, goddess associated with Adinatha
Ananta, cosmic serpent sheltering or supporting Vishnu
Andhaka, demon speared by Shiva
Ardhanarishvara, Shiva joined with Parvati in a single image
Arjuna, hero of the *Mahabharata*; fights Shiva in the Kiratarjuniya story
Aruna, charioteer of Surya
ashvamedha, royal horse-sacrifice

Babhubali, Jain saint; son of Adinatha
Bali, demon king subdued by Trivikrama
Bhairava, demonic form of Shiva
Bhikshatana, Shiva as a wandering ascetic
Bhima, mighty Pandava hero in the *Mahabharata*
Bhringi, skeletal sage who attends on Shiva
Bhudevi, earth goddess rescued by Varaha
Brahmi, one of the *matrikas*
chamara, fly-whisk
chatur-mukha, with four faces
Chhaya, substitute wife of Surya

Dasharatha, father of Rama in the *Ramayana*
Devi, great goddess
dharma, traditional law
dikpalas, celestial guardians of the eight directions of space
Durga, goddess who slays the buffalo demon Mahisha
dvarapala, door-guardian, usually armed

Gajendra, elephant rescued by Vishnu
Galaganatha, name of Shiva
ganas, dwarfish imps in Shiva's retinue
Ganesha, elephant-headed god, considered the son of Parvati
Ganga, the Ganga personified as a river goddess
Garuda, eagle mount of Vishnu
Gommata, another name of Bahubali
Govardhana, mountain lifted by Krishna to shield the herds from Indra's storm

hamsa, goose

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Scenes from the childhood of Krishna; basement panel from the Upper Shivalaya, Badami.

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